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Cultural Functions: Histories of Community and Civic Cycle Drama

by

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©

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"Because it's fun."

—GPJE

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, who waited, and to my husband, who continues to love me beyond reason.

Abstract

Current trends in medieval drama scholarship encourage studies that examine dramatic texts within their historical contexts. This dissertation undertakes such an historically contextualized reading of civic cycle drama, also known as "Corpus Christi," "guild," "mystery," or "miracle" plays. Examining the texts of Chester, Coventry, Newcastle, and York, I demonstrate that these cycles are uniquely situated within their local contexts, and I explore their cultural functions within their communities. I find that the motivations for and results of participation in each city varied significantly among participants, and that both sponsoring craft associations and civic authorities frequently employed these plays as tools for transformation and identity negotiation. The interaction of texts and contexts reveals complex, dynamic cultural artifacts whose meanings are continually reconstructed in the moment of performance.

Chapter One explores several craft-pageant relationships in Chester over time, and demonstrates how participation in the play can bolster status and help divide or unite craft groups with similar economic interests. I explore these relationships through case studies of several crafts, including Barkers (or Tanners); Cappers and Linendrapers; Painters; Mercers, Vintners, and Merchants; and Blacksmiths. Chapter Two explores the Chester play as a transformative tool for civic culture, examining the text's commentary on civic violence and jurisdictional interference. Chapter Three traces the Coventry Cappers' attainment of a pageant and posits divergent motivations for artisanal and civic participants. Specifically, I discuss a connection between chapel ownership and pageant sponsorship that implies religious motivations for production. I also explore resonances between the extant pageants and a period of local economic crisis. Chapter Four, which

focuses on Newcastle, demonstrates how even a minimal amount of contextual documentary evidence can inform an extant text. In this chapter, I read the Shipwrights' *Noah* pageant as representative of craft-city conflict, and demonstrate how local tensions are recuperated in favour of a larger anxiety over Scottish invasion. Finally, Chapter Five turns to York; focusing on the Carpenters and Masons, I show that the origins and motivations of participation are more diverse than has been previously acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

The linear nature of writing ensures that these acknowledgements will be out of order; many of the people I have to thank should come at the top of the list. In writing this dissertation I have depended on family, colleagues, friends, and even the occasional stranger. Without these people neither I nor this dissertation would be as rich.

Let me begin with Scott, my husband, who has supported me through five and a half years of madness and gradual self-discovery. This dissertation has been a catalytic experience, one that has helped me refine my personality and grow as an academic, but I could not have withstood its trials without Scott to provide stability, continuity, patience, and love. I am an idealist in all things except myself, but in his eyes I can see the person I aim to be. Scott has read drafts, talked through troublesome passages, offered suggestions, and proof-read final versions. He has given me space when I needed it, cheerfully bid me farewell when research trips beckoned, and held me close when it all seemed too much. He is the reason I began this process, and the reason I have finished it.

Next, my parents. I thank my father for gallantly facing the practical realities that often flummox me, whether it's finding the cheapest flights to England or ordering the laptop on which I finished this dissertation. At the eleventh hour, he was the one who took the files from my exhausted hands and returned with copies the next day. He has done his best to make my life easier so I can focus on the work before me. As for my mother, words cannot express my gratitude. It goes without saying that she brought me into the world, but she also fostered my love of language and learning, taught me to dream of new possibilities, showed me how to appreciate the small beauties, and gave me a reason to finish this dissertation. She has read every word I have written and helped me to find truth in the writing. As an editor she has given advice on structure, coaxed out more reader-friendly prose, and asked the questions that pushed my argument further. As a friend, she has talked, wept, and laughed with me. I am blessed to be her daughter.

My committee has been the academic equivalent of my parents. Pat, Stephen, and Garrett have been mentors, role models, and friends, and I am honoured to have their guidance. Pat has always been my ideal of a female academic. She is an inspiring teacher and an awe-inspiring academic. She introduced me to Foucault and Butler in an undergraduate theory seminar, and the seeds she planted then have flowered into the theoretical perspective that influences my research, teaching, and approach to life. Stephen, too, represents an ideal for me, that of the erudite medieval scholar. Stephen's courses have broadened my scope, and he has consistently encouraged me to look deeper, to see the connections and reasons beyond the surface in both my research and teaching. I admire Stephen for his immense knowledge and for his dedication to his students and to detail. I will never know as much as Stephen, but I will try.

Garrett has been my guide through academia since an honour's tutorial in 1995. His patience, kindness, and enthusiasm won me over, and he has since helped me to recognize my own love for medieval drama. In the summer of 1998, he included me in the preparations for his contribution to the PLS production of the York play, and my experience of that production remains one of the defining moments of my life. It was also at Garrett's insistence that I applied for the PhD program at the University of Alberta and partly due to his efforts that I received funding for the program. Since then, Garrett has been a purveyor of coffee, a patient friend, and a challenging mentor. He has worked tirelessly to broaden my horizons, not just in scholarship, but also in music, film, and theatre. His love of language and his admiration for a well turned phrase has made me more conscious and careful in my writing. At the same time, his empathetic and conscientious concern for the welfare of others has helped me to keep perspective, to remember that there is more to being an academic, and a human being, than writing a dissertation. I am still learning to navigate between worlds, but he has been the best of teachers.

While my committee has provided the guidance for this dissertation, my writing group has kept me going. Renée Ward and Elyssa Warkington have helped set goals, read drafts, asked questions, made comments, and corrected punctuation. I have learned more about both Jack the Ripper (Elyssa—those photos still disturb me!) and Pythogoras (Renée—please, not more philosophy!) than I have ever cared to, but I take consolation in the fact that Elyssa now knows what the words "pageant" and "palatine" mean, while Renée has become a convert for tables. I thank them for helping me take one step at a time, and I promise to continue helping them do the same. One last word for them both: reportage.

Beyond these specific colleagues and friends, there are innumerable people who have cheered my progress and helped to maintain my sanity. Susan McNeil frequently reminded me that my dissertation should be a labour of love, and both she and Elizabeth Gusnoski repeatedly argued for the value of rest when tackling a project of this magnitude. The three of us often met in coffee shops and exchanged moral support as we immersed ourselves in our work. Lesley Peterson provided guidance early in the process, and we gave each other opportunities to discuss our work without expectations. Both Lesley and Melanie Greenaway commented on structural issues in a late draft. My

community of bloggers, which includes my brother and Melanie Thompson along with several others already mentioned, provided encouragement and suggestions. My gamer friends and fellow BSG fanatics regularly cajoled me out of hiding and cheered my successes. People within the department, including every member of the office staff, provided invaluable practical and moral support. I particularly thank Orion Ussner Kidder, Marcie Whitecotton-Carroll, Leslie Robertson, and Kirsten Uszkalo, all of whom helped me maintain perspective in the last few months of writing and revision. I also thank Christel Dahlberg and Wendy Mathews who, along with Scott, Susan, and Elizabeth, proofread the final draft before it was submitted to the committee.

I could continue for pages. My colleagues, friends, and family have made it possible for me to finish this dissertation in a myriad of ways. As with any work of this nature, any flaws or errors that remain are my own, but any triumphs I experience are shared with those who have helped me. Thank you.

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List of Abbreviations

A2A	*Access to Archives*
E&D	*The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents*, R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills
Leet	*The Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register*, ed. Mary Dormer Harris.
REED	Records of Early English Drama
REED: Chester	*Chester*, Records of Early English Drama (REED), ed. Lawrence M. Clopper.
REED: Coventry	*Coventry*, Records of Early English Drama (REED), ed. R. W. Ingram.
REED: Newcastle	*Newcastle upon Tyne*, Records of Early English Drama (REED), J. J. Anderson.
REED: York	*York*, Records of Early English Drama (REED), ed. Alexandra Johnston and Margaret Rogerson.
VCH: Chester	*The City of Chester*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, ed. C. P. Lewis and A. T. Thacker.
VCH: Coventry	*The City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, ed. W. B. Stephens.
VCH: York	*A History of Yorkshire: The City of York*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, ed. P. M. Tillott.
YCR	*York Civic Records*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, ed. Angelo Raine.
YMB	*York Memorandum Book: Lettered A/Y in the Guildhall Muniment Room*, Surtees Society, ed. Maud Sellers.

Introduction: Civic Ceremonials and Cultural Functions

On a Saturday in June, 2003, my genealogical research in the Barrow Public Records Office was disrupted by a loud, repetitive booming, like the sound of a car stereo blaring far too loudly. Half curious, half annoyed, I glanced out the window only to discover that this Saturday, of all the days I could have been in Barrow, was the day of the Rotary Carnival, and the carnival parade was winding its way along the main street outside of the Records office. I watched in amazement as rank after rank of parade participants walked, danced, or slowly rolled by on trucks. There were few actual floats, and the students of local dancing and acting schools seemed to dominate the parade: rows of children grouped by age, in matching costumes—fairies and princesses, cowboys and Indians, even a row of little Uncle Sams. The number of costumed children was almost equaled by the multitude of babies piled onto flatbed trucks and dressed in fuzzy costumes, truckload after truckload of cotton balls with faces. The twin foci of the parade—dancing and children—seemed best summed up by the spectacularly costumed, dancing stilt walkers (the Barracudas, a local carnival troupe) and the Barrow Dads' Group float, featuring a Shrek and his little Fiona.

The following summer, in July, 2004, I found myself again witnessing a civic parade, this time in honour of the Edmonton Klondike Days Festival. The experience was radically different, dominated by a grand display of transportation. Klondike officials and civic dignitaries rode in vintage cars and horse drawn carriages, while themed floats alternated with fire trucks, police cars, ambulances, and public busses ranging from antiques to the newest models. Go carts and soap boxes, riding dogs and miniature ponies sped in front of marching bands and bagpipe troupes which were in turn followed by mounted cavalry. Unlike the smaller social groups which paraded in Barrow, the Klondike floats represented a wide range of businesses, townships, public services, and cultural groups.

Most cities and towns have civic ceremonials like these parades, and there are many generic similarities.[1] Both parades traversed main streets and, in both cases, citizens and tourists came to witness the spectacle. Both represented distinct groups within the social body, albeit on a different scale, reflecting and negotiating a civic identity that included and encompassed these smaller groups.[2] But no one would mistake these parades as being the same. The Klondike Days parade is a highly commercial, regional event, boldly displaying sponsorship logos and incorporating participants from towns throughout Northern and Central Alberta. The city represents itself as the economic and political centre of a province dominated by oil and gas production, the "black gold" signified by the combination of the Festival's Gold Rush theme and the emphasis on transportation in the parade.[3] Barrow's parade, in contrast, is a local, charitable event shaped in response to a crisis of community identity. According to Loyd Grossman of The Cultural Consortium, Barrow

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[1] David Mills uses the phrase "civic ceremonial" in "Religious Drama and Civic Ceremonial." I prefer the term "civic ceremonial" to "ritual" because it emphasizes the urban lived experience that studies of these plays as ritual tend to neglect.

[2] My conception of identity and identity formation is influenced by Judith Butler's articulation of performativity, particularly as it is outlined in *Gender Trouble*.

[3] During the time that I have been working on this project, the Klondike Days festival has been renamed "Capital EX." Begun in 1879 as an agricultural fair, the festival adopted the theme of the gold rush in 1962. The festival organizers justify the recent change in name as a response to the civic community's desire for a "new forward-thinking name and theme—something that reflects all that Edmonton is—past, present and future" (Edmonton's Capital EX). At the same time, the name "Capital EX" represents an intentional absence of theme: "Our guests also expressed concerns that a theme would limit the exhibition's ability to represent the entire community" (Edmonton's Capital EX). Ironically, the egalitarian decision to remove theme from the festival may disrupt the festival's ability to reflect any sense of community at all. How Edmontonians will react to the new non-themed event, and whether they will find ways to make the festival function as a tool of identity negotiation regardless, remains to be seen.

> is a place that is reinventing itself due to the substantial job losses in the defence industry. Through the support of Barrow in Furness Borough Council, a number of cultural developments are encouraging the emergence of a vibrant arts scene and with that new job opportunities in this corner of South West Cumbria. (Barrow-in-Furness)

Barrow's parade reflects the declining economy of a city which has lost its military core, and represents the city's active attempts to re-fashion itself as an artistic community.[4]

Our awareness of the way these ceremonials are rooted in specific times and places is possible because we are conscious of the complex, intricate contexts in which these parades take place. Extending this awareness of context to civic ceremonials in the past, however, is not as easy, and scholars have not always given it priority. Much of the study of medieval civic cycle drama has been plagued by the tendency to generalize both the cycles and the contexts of their production. Civic cycle drama, also known as "Corpus Christi," "guild," "mystery," or "miracle" plays, consisted of processional performances of biblical stories, presented in a number of short pageants and produced by guilds or other similar groups representing subsets of the civic community.[5] Studies before the mid-twentieth century generally found this drama useful only in as much as it informed the study of later playwrights, Shakespeare in particular. Anthologies of medieval drama tended "to underscore the Darwinian assumptions of late nineteenth-century literary criticism, in which Western drama was assumed to have grown in orderly stages" (Bevington 17-18), an effect achieved in part by categorizing collections of medieval drama as "pre-Shakespearean" and "pre-Elizabethan."[6] Moreover, when these anthologies provided selections of civic cycle drama, they combined episodes of the biblical story from different cycles to create an ideal "composite" cycle, creating the impression that these episodes are ultimately interchangeable.[7] As F. M. Salter laments, scholars influenced by these anthologies have tended to dismiss the plays "as the crude and childish productions of a crude and childish people" (*Mediaeval* 81). Because the plays were assumed to have little merit in and of themselves and to be of value only as

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[4] The irony of Barrow's use of American, and particularly Hollywood, imagery in its representation of civic identity has not escaped me, and it reveals the complexities that a study of identity formation must face. The choice to present foreign, contemporary cultural icons as opposed to traditional British ones (such as Arthurian characters or Morris dancers) participates in Barrow's attempts to refashion its identity by privileging an international entertainment market over local, nostalgia-oriented tourism.

[5] I prefer the term "cycle drama" because it refers to the structure and practices of production, while my emphasis on "civic" is intended to reflect the way that these plays are grounded and enmeshed in a civic context. I also use the word "cycle" to distinguish these plays from the N-Town and Towneley play compilations, which, in the past, have been mistaken for civic cycles. Throughout this dissertation I also use the term "play" to refer to specific cycles (e.g. York play, Chester play), while "pageants" refers to the

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individual episodes within these plays. For a recent discussion of the problems of medieval drama terminology, see Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game*: *English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period*. For a discussion of the Towneley text as a compilation, see Garrett Epp, "'Corected & not playd': An Unproductive History of the Towneley Plays" and "The Towneley Plays, or, The Hazards of Cycling." The definition of cycle drama as "biblical" is also open to debate: Pamela King's forthcoming study of the York play argues for a liturgical as opposed to a strictly biblical rationale behind the play (personal interview).

[6] As, for example, John M. Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakesperean Drama* (1897) and A. W. Pollard's *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes: Specimens of the Pre-Elizabethan Drama* (1890, rev. 1927). Bevington discusses these anthologies in his analysis of the trends of editing drama ("Drama Editing and Its Relation to Recent Trends in Literary Criticism"). He identifies a "twofold insult" (21) in these titles, in that they label the plays as literary curiosities and imply that their only value is in reconstructing the history of later drama.

[7] The issues surrounding the composite cycle have a long history. F. M. Salter notes that "in the past scholars have tried to discern the features of a single 'parent cycle'" and he himself claims "the same subjects are treated in the same way, except for minor differences, all over England" (*Mediaeval* 44), a quality he attributes to the influence of the church on the plays. From this perspective, the plays or pageants are interchangeable. Bevington also notes that previous editors have made editorial choices to suit the tastes of a largely Protestant audience (21-24), reinforcing a sense of unity among the cycles. With the growing recognition that each play is distinct, there have arisen more subtle arguments. Bevington, for example, defends an "ideal" cycle in his own anthology when he concludes "that a composite, anthologized cycle needs to focus on what Kolve calls the protocycle of plays appearing in all or most of the individual cycles" (27). The result, however, continues to emphasize an archetypal cycle, rather than one rooted in a particular time and place.

they set the scene for Shakespeare, there was no motivation to consider these texts as productions of particular times and places.

In a series of lectures published in 1955, Salter argues against this trend, asserting that "the real duty of criticism is not to brush [the plays] aside as crude and childish, but to ask what there was in them that could appeal to sane and sensible men in a civilized country for more than two hundred years" (*Mediaeval* 83). More importantly, Salter demonstrates the value of returning to archival material as an aspect of studying dramatic texts when he uses documentary evidence to deconstruct myths about the Chester cycle's origins and its social and religious positioning. In Lecture 3, he employs expense accounts to clarify details of set construction, props, costumes, and actors' rates, in turn emphasizing the overall expense and significance of these productions and challenging academic perceptions of the plays as second-rate theatre. This approach to the study of medieval drama has since taken root both in the production of new editions of the texts and in the revaluation of archival projects.

Two major events of the 1970s help to ground this shift in the study of medieval drama: the first full production of the York play since it was suppressed in the late 1500s and the start of the Records of Early English Drama (REED) archival project, both at the University of Toronto.[8] As Salter foresaw (*Mediaeval* 91-2), the production demonstrated the literary and theatrical merit of cycle drama and has since encouraged further performance-based research that tests historical staging possibilities and limitations. At the same time, REED's consolidation of archives detailing civic performance and entertainment has in turn allowed scholars to construct more complete and informed dramatic histories. Both projects have also drawn attention to the roles civic drama played in community and civic identity: despite the distancing effect of historical reproduction, cycle drama in performance involves the audience, inviting spectators to adopt particular responses to and relationships with the world depicted on stage, while the archives reveal political tensions played out through the context of civic drama, situating the plays in specific cultural contexts.

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[8] REED was founded in 1975, while the York Cycle was first performed in Toronto by the Poculi Ludique Societas (PLS) in 1977. The history of the PLS and REED projects can be found online (Johnston, "History"; Young). The standard discussions of the suppression of cycle drama are Harold Gardiner's *Mysteries' End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage* and Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*. Paul Whitfield White provides an alternative perspective in "Reforming Mysteries' End: A New Look at Protestant Intervention in English Provincial Drama."

Facilitated by more readily accessible full text editions and by the growing awareness of the documentary history surrounding these texts, recent scholarship has shown greater interest in comparing the cycles and compilations as distinct texts.[9] For the most part, this scholarship focuses either on more traditional formalist analyses or on the reconstruction of performance practice, but a third, growing area of interest considers how these texts functioned in the communities that produced them. Scholars such as Mervyn James and Sarah Beckwith have theorized the role of civic cycle drama in terms of community and ritual, on the one hand arguing for a communal experience that overcame mercantile and guild politics, and on the other hand reading the plays as a battleground for these politics. Scholarship in this area typically seeks to analyse the dynamics of power inherent in cycle production. Christina M. Fitzgerald's discussions of the York and Chester plays, for example, demonstrate how these plays contribute to fantasies of masculine identity in relation to patriarchal guild and familial structures while simultaneously reinscribing ideological myths of guild structure and labour practices. While these approaches help to reveal the complex interactions of ideology and power in the civic environment, however, they rarely consider the perspectives and motivations of the craft associations that sponsored the plays.[10] As Anne Higgins states, "The most distinctive fact about English Corpus Christi productions of the late Middle Ages is that trade guilds organized and acted in them" ("Work and Plays" 76), but studies which consider the social and economic context of the plays generally avoid in-depth study of the crafts themselves. Instead, articles addressing these associations tend to focus on the symbolic or commercial relationship between craft and play, as in Glynne Wickham's discussion of trade symbolism or Higgins's exploration of guild casting.

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[9] For example, Martin Stevens's *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles: Textual, Contextual, and Critical Interpretations* attempts to distinguish the character of each cycle or compilation. There are numerous examples of books and articles which compare specific episodes from different cycles and compilations in detail.

The problem with these approaches, as Miri Rubin notes in "Small Groups: Identity and Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages," is that they treat the civic community, and, by extension, the crafts and plays themselves, as static and easily delineated entities—not as groups and texts that changed dynamically over a long performance history. Considering scholarship which sees craft and city participation in the play as either unifying or antagonistic, Claire Sponsler also points out that the "false dichotomy [between utopian and dystopian approaches] . . . threatens to foreclose interpretation" ("Culture" 16), and she calls for "localized investigations" to give a better understanding of the "cultural function of dramatic performances" (29). Similarly, Richard Emmerson notes that "What we need now are more detailed analyses focusing on various regions and towns that draw upon and synthesize the work of social and economic as well as cultural historians" ("Eliding" 27). He encourages histories that "not only situate the dramatic texts more accurately, but also explore how they participate in, rather than just 'reflect,' history" (29).

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[10] Archival materials describe labour associations as "craft," "company," "occupation," or "trade," but rarely, if ever, as "guild"; rather, "guild" is reserved for religious and socio-political associations, like the Corpus Christi and Trinity guilds of Coventry. R. B. Dobson makes a similar point in "Craft Guilds and City: The Historical Origins of the York Mystery Plays Reassessed" (95). While scholars have tended to adopt "guild" as a generic term of association, I prefer to maintain the distinction between "craft" and "guild" to distinguish between groups whose identity was at least nominally centered around labour practices and those who defined themselves on the basis of other characteristics. To do otherwise, I feel, ignores the logic of association behind these groups and elides the centrality of labour to the plays and to civic identity. Pamela King also questions the term "guild," but feels that it over-emphasizes the involvement of masters in actual labour practices. Speaking specifically of the Coventry Cappers, King argues that knitting was traditionally women's work, and that it was unlikely that the wealthy, high status master cappers actually knitted caps themselves. Rather she sees "guilds" more as gentlemen's clubs, associations of (primarily) men who had an interest in the trades but who were not directly involved in production (personal interview, public lecture). King's point challenges assumptions about crafts' social status that are based solely on the status of the labour involved. Associations may represent richer financiers, rather than the labourers themselves. However, regardless of the extent to which craft masters engaged in the trade in question, they chose to identify their associations with respect to labour practices and to identify those associations in their records as "crafts," "companies," and so forth. For this reason, while I preserve the word "guild" (or "gild") in quotations, I will otherwise use the terminology adopted in the archives of each city under discussion.

The task ahead, then, is threefold: to consider the diversity of crafts and their social, political, and economic contexts over a long history; to theorize how the identities of these associations shifted over time in relation to the plays; and to discover how these negotiations in turn characterize the cycles and the civic identities that they helped to construct. Lawrence Clopper moves towards this type of analysis in *Drama, Play, and Game*, when he draws attention to the variation of guild structures and the impact of economic factors (143-159), as does Pamela King in her article on "The York and Coventry Mystery Cycles: A Comparative Model of Civic Response to Growth and Recession." In fact, King identifies her article as a call "to move away from an a-chronological essentialist reading . . . towards an appropriately historicized account" (25).

In this dissertation I aim to construct such "an appropriately historicized account" of the craft associations and plays of four cities: Chester, Coventry, Newcastle, and York. My initial goal is to demonstrate the effectiveness of developing a contextually rich historical approach as a means of understanding the cultural function of civic cycle drama. I see this historical approach as one which is both synchronic and diachronic, and which, like "thick history," owes a great deal to Clifford Geertz's conception of "thick description."[11] In "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," Geertz uses this term to describe his efforts as an ethnographer to comprehend the lived experience of his subjects, to respect and acknowledge the complexity and interconnectedness of the various aspects of life which an anthropological study might otherwise flatten and reify in the process of analysis. Current studies of medieval drama tend towards a similar reification by isolating performance from historical context. The logic of the REED project, for example, extracts references to performance and artistic activity from their archival contexts. REED's methodology has revealed a wealth of previously unrecognized performance activity and the resultant volumes serve as an essential starting point for studies of medieval drama, but, as both Theresa Colletti and Patricia Badir have noted, such excision can also alter our perception of the material that REED presents. In "Reading REED: History and the Records of Early English Drama," Colletti shows how considering dramatic evidence in the absence of a larger historical awareness denies academics the context which gives this evidence meaning, while Badir's "Playing Space: History, the Body and Records of Early English Drama" demonstrates how the archival context of a given reference to performance communicates that reference's significance. In order to analyse the cultural function of the performances which REED highlights, I must first re-situate these performances within an historical context, one that relies on an awareness of the social, political, and economic aspects of specific locations.

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[11] E. Roy Weintraub describes histories of economics that attempt "to contextualize, to historicize, the record" (276) as "thick" histories.

There are two provisos or limitations to this approach. First, this study relies on the work of scholars who have conducted more specialized and detailed analyses of the key urban environments and manuscripts which I consider. Equally significant has been the efforts of scholars who have worked tirelessly to provide archival transcriptions, from REED's performance-related materials to the publication of civic council records. While it is a commonplace to assert that we stand on the shoulders of giants, it is also true that my arguments are limited by the materials and conclusions that others have provided.[12] This limitation is due in part to the realities of a Canadian graduate student with limited access to the archives, but it also reflects the spirit of my project which brings the skilled research of other scholars together in order to comprehend a larger picture. This first proviso leads to the second, that the histories and analyses I present in this dissertation are of necessity incomplete and open to revision. There are always more factors to consider, further spheres of influence to take into account, and elements of the lived experience which can never be recaptured, either because they were never recorded or were unrecordable.

With these limitations in mind, my methodology has been purposefully eclectic. My primary tactic has been to conduct a close analysis of the materials which REED excerpts and, where possible, of other documents created by my subjects which might reveal a sense of group identification, such as craft ordinances and civic orders. These materials are supplemented by the work of economic and urban historians, by studies of demographics and of craft practices, and by the work of other medieval drama scholars. It is in the conjunction of these materials that I find the historical context that I seek and against which I read the inter-relationship of crafts, plays, and cities.

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[12] While Chester, for example, has a great deal of extant archival material, this material is not available in published transcriptions. Similarly, while York's memorandum and house books have been published, the transcriptions in these published volumes are not complete.

In conducting my research for each chapter, I began first with the REED volumes as a way of determining which crafts might best support further exploration with respect to play involvement. I then began to collect evidence from other published transcriptions of both civic and craft records. While I skimmed these materials in their entirety, seeking for patterns and trends which might take on significance in relation to the plays, I specifically focused on records which represented moments of self-definition or justification. A great deal of excellent work has already been done by both economic historians and medieval drama scholars on craft and civic account books and performance practices, and I felt no need to duplicate this work. Rather I focused on craft ordinances and civic orders relating to either craft organization or play production, paying particular attention to the language of preambles and the terminology of membership. While accounts reveal the activities and economic status of participants, ordinances and orders were originally composed to reflect and encompass the groups in question and so also serve to record how these groups saw themselves and each other. Chapters Three and Four in particular rely on the close analysis of these types of records. Beyond these materials, I also looked for (and at times compiled) lists of officially acknowledged craft associations which reflected changes in these associations over time. Chapter One demonstrates the fruitfulness of this "sampling" approach to add a diachronic dimension to the study of cycle drama. Finally, I turned to the work of other historians to develop a richer sense of context in which to read these materials.

I have chosen to focus on Chester, Coventry, Newcastle, and York because they present a wide range of contexts, and for the practical reason that there are REED volumes for each location.[13] Chester and York are obvious selections for this study because they are the only cities with full extant cycle texts. As such, they permit a more complete consideration of how craft histories intersect with the texts. Along with Newcastle, these cities fall into a regional trend; other scholars have noted that large, civic cycles appear most frequently in northern cities. Coventry, on the other hand, represents a more southerly cycle. Both Coventry and Newcastle also have extant but incomplete texts: Coventry's consists of two out of a suggested ten pageants, while Newcastle's remaining pageant is an extremely corrupt fragment of a larger cycle. As a result, studies of the plays in these cities must rely more heavily on the evidence in the records.

Other regional differences influence the identities constructed by these cycles. Three of the cities prided themselves on holding a distinct status: Chester was the capital of the county palatine (a jurisdictional distinction at least nominally free of royal control), Coventry styled itself the Chamber of Princes, and York was the capital of the North. Chester and Newcastle were both border towns, balancing the presence of transitory military personnel within the civic identity. All four towns negotiated a patchwork of religious and secular jurisdictions. There are aspects which connect these towns—a concern with status, the presence of texts and records, historical and regional experiences—but just as many which make each location unique. My selection is intended to demonstrate how, even as some influences on these plays may be similar, each cycle developed in response to unique circumstances, and each city employed its play in very different ways as part of a ceaseless negotiation of civic identity.

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[13] For convenience, citations to the REED volumes will use the abbreviation REED and the name of the city in question (e.g. *REED: York*). I have adopted a similar policy with respect to the Victoria County History volumes, citing them by the abbreviation VCH and the location covered by the volume.

My dissertation begins with a discussion of Chester; this city's wealth of archival material and the existence of a full, extant play allow for a rich exploration of role Chester's cycle plays in both craft and civic identities. While the civic records have not been transcribed and published as fully as in Coventry or York, histories based on extensive archival research, from classic antiquarian works by George Ormerod and Rupert Morris to the more recent volumes of the Victoria County History project, provide a full context against which to read the cycle. In the third and fourth chapters, I turn to two cities for which the archival and textual evidence is scanter, demonstrating the discoveries that can be made even where the material is limited. I begin with Coventry, where I draw on the transcribed Leet records and Charles Phythian-Adams's thorough socio-economic analysis of the city during a key period of cycle production (*Desolation*). I then consider Newcastle, a city with comparatively little extant material, even less of which is available outside of the archives. Nonetheless, I show how a thorough consideration of the available historical material enriches our conception of the play in Newcastle, of its cultural function, and of the significance of the surviving pageant. For each of these three cities, I begin by developing an historical conception of the city and of the cycle's cultural functions within that city. I then consider the play texts of each city within this context, exploring ways that an historical awareness alters our understanding of these cycles and of their participation in a larger civic culture. For Chester, where more material is available for consideration, these two discussions take place over two chapters, while Coventry and Newcastle are considered in their entirety in their own respective chapters. Having demonstrated the value of this contextual approach, I conclude the dissertation with a discussion of the York cycle. Because York has received relatively more attention, I break from the pattern of historical followed by textual consideration and instead explore how an historical approach to York's cycle alters the current scholarly conception of the cultural functions of this key text.

While I have set out to demonstrate a particular approach to the study of civic cycle drama, the ultimate value of this approach must be in the discoveries that it has permitted me to make. My discussions of Chester consider the play first from the perspective of the craft associations which sponsored the pageants, and then as a reflection of the ruling elite's motivations for the production. In both cases, I demonstrate how the crafts and the city adopt the Chester cycle as a vehicle of social transformation, even though their goals sometimes differ. In Chapter Three, I show how economic crisis changed both the motivation and the content of the Coventry play, shifting it from a locally-oriented, religiously motivated production to one focused on the city's status on a national scale. In Chapter Four, I demonstrate the Newcastle play's role in local political conflicts and show how the extant pageant attempts to suppress internal conflicts in favour of presenting a unified front against external enemies. Finally, in the fifth chapter, I turn to York, the most studied of the cycles, to show how a more contextually situated understanding of the sponsoring associations can enrich our appreciation of what the York play meant, to whom, and how the nature of this sponsorship changed over time.

In all chapters, I demonstrate how cycle drama functioned as both a means and a medium of identity negotiation. Because participants were generally organized around principles of urban labour (that is, through the craft system), involvement in a cycle made claims about craft identity and status, although motivations for that involvement could vary widely. Pageant sponsorship, for example, could serve to divide or unite groups, to defend economic independence, or to claim or restrict membership. At the same time, participation in a play made a statement about each craft's relationship to a larger civic identity, negotiating the position of urban labour within that identity. Just as with the crafts, the plays served to negotiate civic membership by restricting or enforcing involvement and by reflecting particular conceptions of civic culture. The many groups involved in cycle production had their own agendas, and these were unique to the civic contexts in question. As a result, each cycle represented multiple perspectives on civic identity that were explored but not necessarily resolved through the medium of performance.

Chapter One

The Chester Companies and the Labour of Identity

The Chester cycle began as a Corpus Christi play sometime in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century; the first evidence of performance is a 1421-2 council order settling a dispute over financial contributions. Records for the fifteenth century are sparse (leading Lawrence M. Clopper to question the production's continuity), but they suggest a one-day, processional performance, possibly along the same route as the Corpus Christi procession, starting from St. Mary-on-the-Hill near Chester castle and ending at St. John's, a collegiate church just outside the city walls.[14] In the sixteenth century, the production date was moved to Whitsun and the cycle was eventually expanded to run over three days. It was still processional, but was now performed in Chester's wide main streets. The four performance stations included stops in front of buildings representing the city's major ecclesiastical and secular authorities, St. Werburgh's Abbey and the Pentice, as well as two stations in front of the Rows, buildings with upper level, covered walkways from which audiences could watch the pageants. Records for this second period of cycle production are more numerous, but extant copies of the play all date from after the last performance in 1575.

Studies of the Chester cycle tend to focus on explaining and rationalizing this checkered history, analyzing texts and records for evidence of the cycle's development. The history of craft involvement, however, has received less attention, in part because this involvement can seem uncomplicated. The extant play texts of any given cycle privilege the craft ascriptions recorded with the pageants. While the records do occasionally allow scholars to acknowledge changes in pageant assignment and theorize the shifts in the content and applicability of these pageants, these scholars generally assume a static relationship between craft and pageant as the context of other discussions. For example, F. M. Salter overlooks variable craft participation when he explores the financial aspects of pageant production in his lecture "A Day's Labour." Despite acknowledging the 1520-1 Pewterers' agreement to contribute to the Smiths' pageant in an earlier lecture (*Mediaeval* 46), Salter does not consider the potential financial impact of the Smiths' shifting membership over a century after the play began. More recently, Richard Emmerson has warned against "the tendency of even the best scholars to remove the text from history" ("Contextualizing" 94). The records available in Chester permit a more subtle understanding of the historical relationships between crafts and pageants over time, demonstrating that not all crafts approached their role in civic cycles in the same way. While a few crafts do indeed appear to have maintained a stable, perhaps even static, relationship with their pageants, some craft groupings developed into distinct companies based on their similarities or differences to other crafts, and these shifts in identity were negotiated through the cycle.[15] A closer look at the long term history of craft-pageant relationships in Chester provides insight into the fragile and sometimes arbitrary craft groupings that supported the play, as well as a better understanding of the role of this play in identity formation among crafts. Participating in the cycle was part of a claim to official craft status, and could serve to divide or unite associations through their assertion of distinct identities. Pageant sponsorship could be both a tactic of identity negotiation and a factor of identity itself.

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[14] For an introduction to the Chester cycle, see David Mills, "The Chester Cycle," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (Ed. Richard Beadle, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994, 109-33). Clopper suggests the possible distinction between a fifteenth-century Passion play and the sixteenth-century cycle in "The History and Development of the Chester Cycle," although Mills generally argues against this position.

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[15] Chester records use the words "craft" and "occupation" interchangeably, but generally reserve the word "Company" for more formally recognized associations.

One way to survey the history of crafts in a particular city is to compare the lists of crafts recorded at different points in that city's history. Some of these lists are related directly to the plays, while others may serve different administrative functions. This sampling approach helps establish continuity and demonstrates periods in which shifts of identity take place. In conjunction with these lists, a survey of records can help to explain absences, motivations, and, at times, the purpose and authority of specific documents. In the discussion of the Chester play that follows, I start by comparing lists of craft-pageant relationships over time, and then turn to specific case studies to demonstrate how certain craft associations and groupings made use of their participation in the Chester cycle as tool in their negotiations of identity.

The most significant lists for constructing an historical comparison of craft-pageant relationships in Chester are the Early and Late Banns, speeches designed to advertise the forthcoming production and to warn crafts to prepare their pageants. In *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents*, R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills collate the craft ascriptions and pageant content from the extant texts of the play with the Early and Late Banns.[16] They also consider another list that accompanies the Early Banns in Harley 2150 (195-202). This latter list claims to identify the "craftys of the Citie" which "bere the charge of the pagyns in pley of corpus chr*isti* pena x li" (*REED:*

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[16] *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents* will be abbreviated as *E&D* in parenthetical citations.

Chester 31).[17] With the exception of the Early Banns and the craft list (copied in 1539-40), the materials that Lumiansky and Mills consider date from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, all after the last performance of the cycle in 1575. Lumiansky and Mills date the five extant versions of the cycle to 1591, 1592, 1600, 1604, and 1607, while the Late Banns were copied in 1600, 1604, and 1609 (*E&D* 194, 272). Because these materials represent or describe the cycle as it was produced, this latter group of texts necessarily reflects the status of the Chester play in or before 1575, but attempts to assign specific dates to composition and revision are fraught with controversy.[18] Nonetheless, expanding this collation further in both temporal directions can reveal more about these crafts and their association with the cycle, as well as put other records in better context. Indeed, Lumiansky and Mills provide two other lists which, "although not directly connected with the cycle, may furnish assistance in dating probable changes in the development of the cycle" (*E&D* 257). These include a list of apprenticeship fees, recorded in 1475-6, and a list of crafts from 1500.[19] In the Chester REED volume, Clopper notes with respect to the second list, "we can only be certain that it comes from the period 1474-1521" (515).[20] A final list, an undated Midsummer Proclamation included in *REED: Chester*, provides a glimpse of the city's crafts and companies sometime after the end of the play.

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[17] I have silently removed REED notation when it does not pertain to the discussion. For example, in the entry quoted above, REED supplies "chr*isti* [pena] ˚pena˚ x li," indicating that "pena" was cancelled or erased and then added again by a different or later hand. I maintain the italics which indicate expansion of abbreviation.

[18] Both sets of Banns were certainly composed earlier than the extant versions. Lumiansky and Mills date the composition of the Early Banns to 1521 (*E&D* 181), while Clopper more cautiously suggests a range of years from 1505 to 1521 ("History" 228). Both agree that the extant version in Harley 2150 dates from 1539-40, and both suggest that the original composition was revised by the 1530s (*E&D* 190; "History" 231). Lumiansky and Mills are more tenuous about the Late Banns, stating that "just when the original Late Banns were composed is not clear because of the scarcity of evidence" (*E&D* 190). Clopper argues for an original composition in response to the national suppression of Corpus Christi celebrations in 1548 ("History" 233), and a further revision (or revisions) between 1561-72 (240). See both Lumiansky and Mills and Clopper, as well as an earlier article by Salter ("Banns"), for detailed discussions theorizing the dates and revisions of specific pageants.

[19] Salter also discusses the value of these two lists ("Banns" 9-11), but his comparison is troubled by a conjectured earlier version of the Early Banns.

By considering the craft ascriptions in the five play manuscripts as the equivalent of one list, I have delineated seven craft lists that range from 1475-6 to some point after the play was discontinued in 1575. They are,

Table 1: Chester Craft Lists by Date

List of Apprenticeship Fees	1475-6
List of Crafts	1500 (1474-1521)
List of Participating Crafts	1539-40
Early Banns	1539-40
Ascriptions in Play Texts	1591-1607
Late Banns	1609
Midsummer Proclamation	Undated

A potential eighth list exists in Rogers's 1609 *Breviary*, accompanying the Late Banns, but this list is an exact copy of the 1539-40 List of Participating Crafts and, as such, cannot contribute to an understanding of craft-pageant development. Placing the seven lists side by side makes the lines of continuity and disjunction more visible. The appended chart presents these lists in full (see Appendix 1).

Several of these lists require closer examination. The earliest is that of apprenticeship fees enrolled in 1475-6. This list records crafts which were respected, established, and organized enough both to set and register their apprenticeship fees at the time. Negative evidence is not conclusive: a poorer craft might not charge or register an apprenticeship fee, while other crafts may have deliberately neglected to register their fees as a matter of resisting civic control.[21] Nonetheless, in combination with other evidence, such as charters and civic ordinances, this list can suggest which crafts were in existence before the bulk of the performance records arise.[22]

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[20] Clopper discusses his reasoning in "The History and Development of the Chester Cycle" (223-225). He notes that the date of 1500 is dependant entirely on Greg's analysis of the handwriting. He suggests a broader range of time on the basis that there is not enough evidence to specify the date of composition.

Lumiansky and Mills suggest that the second list, that from around 1500, "probably indicates the order of the guilds for the performances of the cycle" (*E&D* 257). Clopper disagrees, arguing that the list represents craft "order in the Corpus Christi procession" ("History" 225). The tantalizing similarity between the order of this list and the order of the pageants (only the Barkers are in the wrong place) makes Lumiansky and Mills's suggestion more convincing, but, in either case, the 1500 list establishes a line of continuity from the trades identified in the 1475-6 list.

The third list, the 1539-40 List of Participating Crafts, is probably the most controversial. Clopper calls it the "List of Companies" and argues that it "correspond[s] to the extant texts and the Late Banns [and] it must have been compiled after 1548 when the *Assumption* may have been suppressed" ("History" 226).[23] Lumiansky and Mills, on the other hand, avoid discussing the list's authority, acknowledging only that the list "gives information about the cycle different from that furnished in the Early Banns" (*E&D* 177), and they assert that the list "seems to date from 1539-40" (257). A comparison of lists demonstrates that, contrary to Clopper's opinion, the 1539-40 list does not correspond well with any of the other extant materials. In fact, this comparison reveals several things about the nature of the list. First, it becomes clear that Randle Holme, the seventeenth-century antiquarian who added marginal craft ascriptions to the Early Banns, based his marginalia for those Banns on the List of Participating Crafts. With the exception of the Cappers, whom he pairs with the Linendrapers, Holme's deviations from the crafts listed in the Early Banns match those in the 1539-40 list.[24] In other words, the marginalia simply duplicate this list and do not establish continuity with later lists. Once one eliminates Holme's marginalia, it becomes evident that the 1539-40 list serves a different purpose than the other, descriptive lists.

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[21] Further archival research would help determine the status of the apprenticeship list, confirm the presence or absence of crafts not named in the list, and suggest reasons why existing crafts did not register their fees.

[22] Clopper notes that "We can be sure that a play was being performed by 1422 on Corpus Christi Day because there was a dispute in that year between the Coopers and Ironmongers over their responsibilities for the Scourging and Crucifixion" (*REED: Chester* liii). Overall, however, records for the fifteenth century are sparse.

[23] Clopper adds, as supporting evidence, that "a list similar to this one was in circulation as a separate document among the antiquarians of Chester in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries" ("History" 226). He is almost certainly referring to the duplicate copy in Rogers's *Breviary* of 1609. However, the existence of later, duplicate copies does not prove late composition.

The list presents twenty-five pageants and associated craft groupings. Not including alternate names (such as Innkeeper for Hostler), there are fifty-eight named participatory crafts, eleven of which appear in no other list before or after 1539-40. Some of the other crafts reappear in the same craft groupings in the Midsummer Proclamation, but four crafts—the Turners, Cardmakers, Hatters, and Girdlers—are associated with entirely different craft groupings.[25] In total, fifteen out of fifty-eight, nearly 26%, of the crafts named in this list have little or no other association with the play. As well, two of the named crafts, the Tapsters and Walkers, are not mentioned again after 1539-40, which raises the percentage of potential non-participating crafts to

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[24] Holme must have included the Linendrapers because they had taken over the Cappers' responsibilities in his day, but the Linendrapers did not receive a charter until February 1552 (*REED: Chester* 317).

[25] The Cardmakers, Hatters, and Girdlers are listed together with the Skinners in the 1539-40 list, while the Cardmakers, Headmakers, and Girdlers are listed with the Smiths in the Midsummer Proclamation. Headmakers made hats, so it is possible that this is the same group designated as Hatters in the earlier list. The Turners form an entirely new group with the Carvers and Joiners.

29%. In contrast, only two of the crafts not previously listed continue to be associated with the play in lists after 1539-40. What function did the 1539-40 list serve if it described neither the current nor future structure of craft-pageant relationships?

As noted above, the description heading the List of Participating Crafts explains, "These be the craftys of the Citie the whiche craftys bere the charge of the pagyns in pley of corpus ch*risti* pena x li" (*REED: Chester* 31). This attention to financial arrangements suggests a connection to the cycle's expansion into a three-day production. Lumiansky and Mills suggest that the Early Banns were first composed around 1521 when the Corpus Christi play became the Whitsun play, and then revised again in the early 1530s for the three-day Whitsun plays. Certainly the 1539-40 list anticipates a three-day production: it specifies which pageants are to be performed on each day. More importantly, the introductory descriptions read like a civic order in listing a specific regulation followed by a fine for infraction: the crafts listed will pay for the pageants or pay a fine of ten pounds. This structure implies that the 1539-40 list is prescriptive, rather than descriptive. In fact, many of the suggested associations have the pleasant appropriateness that scholars like to find in craft-pageant relationships—the Glovers and Parchment Makers, both craftsmen of fine skins and leathers, are told to cooperate on a pageant together, while the Wrights and Slaters are encouraged to work with their fellow housing trades of Tilers, Daubers, and Thatchers—but this appropriateness is precisely why this list is suspect, and possibly why the envisioned groupings so often failed. Logical and pleasing associations do not always reflect human interactions. Associations of crafts such as the Barbers and Chandlers, or the Saddlers and Fusters (saddle-tree makers) would have been successful precisely because they combined groups which would not compete for customers or supplies. The 1539-40 list reveals what the civic assembly would have had the play mean, not who actually performed it.

Passing over the comparatively straightforward lists of the play scripts and Banns, the final list to consider is that provided by an undated Midsummer Proclamation from Harley 2150 that summons the "Alderm*en* and stewards of everie societie and Companie" (*REED: Chester* 474) to the Midsummer Watch. While Clopper does not suggest a date for this proclamation, I have placed it at the end of the chronological list. There are two details in the record that suggest an approximate date around the end of the sixteenth century. First, the fifth entry calls for the attendance of "The Alderm*en* and stewards of Cappers, Pinners, Wyredrawers, Bricklayers and linnen drapers" (*REED: Chester* 475). A petition from the Linendrapers in 1679 supplied in the REED volume notes that the Bricklayers did not join their company until 1603.[26] The petition requests that the companies be divided again, and is granted, which suggests a composition date for the Midsummer Proclamation between 1603 and 1679. However, this date range is expanded by a record summarized in the *Access to Archives* (*A2A*) catalogue.[27] The catalogue describes a record dated 1671 as

> Petition of the Aldermen, Stewards and Company of Cappers, Pinner [sic], Wiredrawers and Linen-drapers stating that in 1589, they received the bricklayers

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[26] Clopper misreads the date in BL Add 16179, recording it as 1618-19, but Elaine Pordes of the British Library confirms that "the date that appears on the Linendrapers' Petition on folio 25, is 13 February 1679" (email). This date is confirmed [illegible] the *Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Catalogue* entry for the Company Records (ZG 6), which notes, "In 1602, the Bricklayers were ordered to join the Company, but became a separate Company by order of the City Assembly in 1679, on account of 'their Chargeableness and Rudeness.'"

[27] *Access to Archives* is an online database being constructed by the national archives network which is intended to describe "archives held throughout England and dating from the 900s to the present day."

> into their company to aid in the charges of the Whitsun plays. The plays have been discontinued for many years and the Midsummer show came up instead. They are willing to contribute to this alone and ask for the exclusion of the bricklayers from their company. (ZA/F/40c/35)

This is the same request that is eventually granted in 1679, but it claims that the Bricklayers joined the company only fourteen years after the play ended, in 1589, instead of twenty-eight years after, in 1603. If this entry supersedes the one supplied by Clopper, then it expands the dates of potential composition from 1589 to 1679.

The sixteenth and seventeenth entries in the Proclamation narrow this range. These entries call for the "wors*hipfu*ll Companie of Mercers & appo*thecaries*" and the "Companie of wors*hipfu*ll Ironmongers & grocers" respectively (*REED: Chester* 475).[28] According to the *A2A* catalogue, the Mercers and Ironmongers applied to be joined as one company in 1598, under the mayoralty of Thomas Fletcher, and their application was accepted under the mayoralty of John Ratclyffe, who was mayor in 1601-2.[29] The Chester REED volume confirms this relationship with an undated record describing the amalgamation of the Mercers and Ironmongers, which explains that they will present two children in the Midsummer Procession "in respecte that the said companyes of m*er*cers and Iremongers are vnited and made one companye and fellowshipp, whereas before they were two companyes" (471). By May of 1605, the Mercers and Ironmongers' accounts detail the expense of outfitting these two children. The fact that the Proclamation calls the two Companies to the watch separately indicates that they had not yet joined at the time that the Proclamation was written. Since they had joined by 1602, and had started presenting children at the Midsummer Procession by 1605 at the latest, this limits the composition of the Midsummer Proclamation to sometime between 1589 and 1605. This means that the Proclamation provides a glimpse of the Chester crafts and companies fourteen to thirty years after the last production of the Whitsun Plays.

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[28] Both "& appo*thecaries*" and "& grocers" are additions in the hand of the antiquarian Randle Holme, who did not start collecting until the 1630s (*REED: Chester* xxiv). Moreover, while the Company Book Clopper reviewed for the REED volume is entitled "Mercers, Ironmongers, Grocers, and Apothecaries' Company," according to the national archives network's online catalogue, the company is not listed by this name until the 1690s. My current argument is concerned only with the association of the Mercers and Ironmongers, but the company's overall history begs further consideration.

[29] Salter says that this merger took place in 1575 ("Banns" 2), but the records listed in *A2A* suggest the later dates noted above.

An Exploration of Craft History

With the exception of the 1539-40 list, then, these lists suggest how craft groupings shifted over time, particularly with respect to their roles in civic ceremonials, from approximately 1475 to 1600. This movement among craft groupings reflects a history of identity negotiation that strove to balance the desire for distinct identity and economic self-determination with the financial obligation of pageant production. The more unified and organized a particular trade became, the more control it would have over markets and membership, and the more influence it would have with respect to civic governance. Rupert Morris provides several examples of long standing trades pressuring the city to exclude the competition of those outside the civic franchise and to enforce membership of those within the franchise. For example, in October 1593, the Barber Surgeons "exhibited their bill againste forren surgeons, prayinge that they may be excluded or ells to enter into bandes not to trade their occupacions within the saide cittie hereafter" (Morris 409). In a similar vein, Clopper records an earlier charter, from 1471-2, whereby the king grants the Saddlers a monopoly in the city with the aim of supporting "the burdens and costs of the play and pageant assigned to occupiers of the same art and city" (*REED: Chester* 498). Participation in the play becomes a justification for the defense of a monopoly and helps define the group in question as a distinct trade by establishing the extent of financial obligation. In contrast, shifting definitions of membership as well as variations in financial contribution signal unfixed, troubled, or threatened identities.

In some cases, the relationship between craft and pageant is relatively stable. The Goldsmiths, Butchers, and Fishmongers first appear in the 1475-6 List of Apprenticeship Fees, and the status of their associations continues unaltered through to the Midsummer Proclamation. Other crafts change only their names: Hewsters become Dyers, Shearmen become Clothiers or Clothworkers, and Corvisors become Shoemakers and Cordwainers.[30] In fact, every pageant maintains a core connection with at least one craft, a connection professed by the extant texts and Banns. More revealing are the crafts which shift around these core trades, as well as those which come late to the cycle or seem to disappear before the cycle's end. Lumiansky and Mills note that the Tanners, Cappers, and Painters are all late additions to the cycle, each craft joining the production sometime in the early sixteenth century (*E&D* 171-4). The diverse trajectories of each of these companies after they join the cycle represent different relationships with the play as part of these groups' attempts to establish and maintain distinct identities, particularly ones which assert economic and social significance within the city. Further examples can be seen in the mercantile and metal working crafts, where pageant participation helped either to divide or unite crafts based on similar activities and materials. In the sections that follow I will explore these five groups—the Tanners, Cappers, Painters, Mercers and Vintners, and the various metal trades grouped under the Smiths—in detail to demonstrate ways that different craft-groupings made use of pageant sponsorship as a tactic of identity negotiation.

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[30] Stability in these cases is only relative. Changes in craft status, the political and economic climate, and the behaviour of craft members would impact a craft's relationship with its pageant as well as the craft's sense of distinct identity at any given time. These particular groups can be considered comparatively stable because they were never so financially destitute as to be relieved of their ceremonial responsibilities; they maintained continuity in the craft lists throughout the period. However, it may be that a change in name reflects an active change in identity; such as I suggest for the Barkers and Tanners below. More research into specific trades and their practices will allow further discussion of seemingly stable craft-pageant relationships and the motivation of name changes.

Barkers and Tanners: Asserting Independence through Craft Sponsorship

Lumiansky and Mills note that "the Tanners (Barkers) appear jointly with the Corvisors" in the 1500 list but that "by 1521 . . . the Tanners now have responsibility for the opening pageant presenting the creation of the angels and the fall of Lucifer" (*E&D* 173-4). They suggest 1521 as the *terminus ad quem* based on their analysis of the composition of the Early Banns. Clopper reads the evidence differently, placing the Tanners' entry after 1521 but before the Newhall Proclamation of 1531-2, because the latter mentions the content of the opening pageant ("History" 228). The key difference in the interpretations of these scholars is in their reading of irregular stanza forms in the Banns. Clopper, following Salter, sees the irregular stanzas as evidence of revision ("History" 227), while Lumiansky and Mills argue, "The original author of the Banns . . . may never have intended to produce a completely regular assignment of four lines for each pageant" (*E&D* 178). However, none of these scholars discusses the curious change in the craft's name from Barkers to Tanners which accompanies the shift in pageant responsibility. In keeping with its aim of prescriptive financial inclusion, the 1539-40 list allows "Barkers or Tanners," but the Early Banns and subsequent lists refer only to Tanners.

This shift could simply reflect a linguistic transition, but it can also signal a conscious alteration of identity, one that coincided with the adoption of the new pageant. The term "Barker" emphasizes a particular aspect of the trade, rather than the process as a whole. The *OED* defines "bark" as a verb meaning "To treat with bark, steep in an infusion of bark; to tan" (2), whereas "tan" means "To convert (skin or hide) into leather by steeping in an infusion of an astringent bark, as that of the oak, *or by a similarly effective process*" (1a, emphasis mine). The definition of "Tanner" is potentially broader than that of "Barker," allowing the inclusion of other tanning methods. An active re-naming of Barkers as Tanners would reflect a desire to expand the base of economic control and contribution, a move both justified by and necessary for the financial obligation of taking on a pageant as a solitary company.

The Chester Freemen Rolls reinforce the likelihood that the name change reflects a conscious move. Prior to 1538-9, freemen who practiced tanning were entered exclusively as Barkers; in that year, however, the first Tanner was entered. Another Barker was entered two years later (1540-1), but after a five year gap in which no tanning craftsmen were entered, freemen of this trade were entered exclusively as Tanners. This shift is too abrupt to be coincidental.

The mid-sixteenth century was not the first time that the Tanners had attempted to establish a separate identity. Morris notes that the Tanners sought protection from the Cordwainers (shoemakers specializing in shoes of cordovan leather) as early as 1362, but that the charter granted to them was revoked in 1370 "on the ground that the separation of the trades was not to the interest of the City, and he [Edward III] granted to the Skinners, Shoemakers, and Tanners, a charter for the joint exercise of the three crafts" (411).

Morris theorizes that the Tanners later achieved separation, since they are not mentioned in the 1410 charter of Skinners and Shoemakers, but the Tanners' continued association with the Corvisers (another word for Cordwainer or Shoemaker) in the 1500 list belies this supposition.[31] It seems more likely that the Tanners' adoption of the new opening pageant was specifically connected to their desire to separate themselves from the influence of other crafts, and that this particular attempt was successful because it coincided with the city's desire to expand the play over a three-day festival. In this instance, the Tanners' pageant represents a civic sanction of the craft's self-definition as a separate company.

It should be noted that there is a seven to seventeen year gap between the suggested dates for the Tanners' assumption of their new pageant (1521-1531) and the transition from Barkers to Tanners in the Freemen Rolls (1538-9). Artisans who wished to join a craft and work as masters were required to purchase the civic freedom, which in turn allowed them to trade and practice their craft free from tolls, and one would expect craft identification in the Rolls to reflect common naming practices. This gap between the date of the new pageant and the change in Freemen's entries encourages two possible explanations. First, it is likely that the change in name took time to enter common use. Most apprenticeships lasted a minimum of seven years (Morris 443), and it would take some years after the end of an apprenticeship before a journeyman would have the funds or need to take out the Freedom. During this time, newcomers and already established, non-free citizens taking out the Freedom, as well as the clerks recording their information, may simply have followed traditional nomenclature. At the same time, it is also possible that the suggested dates of the Tanners' entry (before 1521 or between 1521 and 1531-2) are too early. Because there are no Tanners' (or Barkers') records extant, dating relies on interpretations of more general documents related to the play as a whole. Clopper's primary evidence for dating the Tanners' entry to before 1531-2 is that the Newhall proclamation "says that the plays will begin 'with the creac*i*on & fall of Lucifer'" (*REED: Chester* 228). However, Salter acknowledges that the Tanners' pageant "encroaches upon that of the Drapers which follows it," and he argues that "at some time before 1540 the Tanners secured a new play into which went some of the Creation material of the Drapers" ("Banns" 452). Lumiansky and Mills similarly note overlap between the Tanners and Drapers pageants, suggesting that the "Mappa Mundi" called for by the Early Banns in the Drapers' pageant may represent "the map of the universe—as God may have created it in the Tanners' preceding pageant" (*E&D* 179). The truth is that there is no record of the original content of the Drapers' pageant—the extant records simply confirm that the Drapers owned and stored a pageant wagon from 1465-6 on. It is possible that the original Drapers' pageant included a section on or reference to the fall of Lucifer, and this material was subsequently divided with the Tanners when the Chester play expanded. Further archival research, particularly in civic ordinances and apprenticeship indentures, would more specifically pinpoint the transition from Barkers to Tanners and, consequently, reveal when the company received civic support for its assertion of an identity separate from the other leather trades.

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[31] Clopper notes this problem with respect to Salter's argument, which relies in turn on Morris ("History" 223 n. 16).

The Rise and Fall of the Cappers: Claiming Civic Status

While some crafts exhibit stable, long-term relationships with their pageants, others display fractious ones, betraying the economic instability that underpinned—and undermined—these productions. The best example of this pattern is seen in the crafts associated with the fifth pageant, which tells the stories of *Moses and the Law* and *Balack and Balaam*. None of the crafts associated with this pageant appear in the 1475-6 and 1500 lists, but, by the Early Banns, the Cappers and Pinners are accounted responsible. In the Late Banns, the craft responsibility shifts to the Cappers and Linendrapers, an association reflected in George Bellin's versions of the manuscripts (Lumiansky and Mills, *E&D* 196), while the other remaining manuscripts attribute the pageant to the Cappers alone. To complicate the issue further, the Midsummer Proclamation groups the Cappers, Pinners, Wiredrawers, Bricklayers, and Linendrapers together, suggesting a continuity of the old relationships and the addition of a new one.[32]

A record from 1603, and the previously mentioned Linendrapers' Petition from 1679, clarify the history of the relationship between these crafts and their pageant. The first record explains the general history of the pageant. From "aunciente tyme," the company of Cappers, Pinners, and Wiredrawers had "yearelye ioyned to geather in settinge foorth their pagines both at plaies at Whitsontyde and at the Watch on Mydsomer" (*REED: Chester* 485). The record explains that, when the Pinners and Wiredrawers "decayed," the Linendrapers joined with the Cappers to produce the pageant and show. When the Cappers subsequently became destitute, the Bricklayers joined the Linendrapers. The latter transition occurred after the end of the play (either 1589 or

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[32] Salter acknowledges that "the history of the Cappers' gild is complicated," but he does not appear to have discussed "their play at a later time" ("Banns" 455) as he intended. Several of the statements he makes about the Cappers are problematic. For example, he claims that the Wiredrawers joined the Smiths in 1554, but I cannot find evidence of this, and it does not concur with the Midsummer Proclamation. He also suggests that the Bricklayers eventually supported the Midsummer Show alone because the other companies had grown too poor to participate, but this seems unlikely, given that the Linendrapers instigate the separation of companies in 1679 based on the Bricklayers' poverty. He may have been responding to the 1603 record now transcribed in *REED: Chester* (485) which describes the financial ruin of the companies previously involved and enforces the Linendrapers' continued contribution.

1603, as discussed above), but the general history displays a pattern of rising and falling occupations, all of whom saw some benefit in participating in civic spectacle. The 1679 record shows the continuation of this pattern when the Linendrapers sought to separate themselves from the Bricklayers because the latter were "troublesome and unserviceable to their Company many of them being very poor and unable to contribute . . ." (*REED: Chester* 317).

As other scholars have noted, the Cappers came late to this pageant. A copy of a Cappers' Petition from 1523-4 notes that they were ordered to produce "A playe conc*er*nynge the store of kynge balak & Balam the proffet" (*REED: Chester* 25) in the mayoralty of Thomas Smith, who was mayor in 1504-5, 1511-12, 1515-16, 1520-1, and 1521-2. Lumiansky and Mills conclude that "the Cappers had their pageant by 1521" (*E&D* 172), and they suggest that the absence of the Cappers from the 1500 list means that the pageant was not added until after the turn of the century. The Freemen's records shed little light on this supposition—only four men are entered as Cappers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. More significant is the wording of their petition in 1523-4. They claim that, in exchange for their agreement to produce the pageant, the Mayor and his Brethren had agreed to address the situation whereby the Cappers

> ffonde theyme grevyde & gretely hurtyd and impou*er*yshed / by reason / that not only the Mercers of the Sayde Citie but as well dyu*er*se others occupac*i*ons of the same Citie / do dayly occupye theire sayd occupac*i*on as well in reteyllynge of cowrse wares vnd*er* the p*r*ice of xvj of the dossen as aboue. (*REED: Chester* 25)

According to the petition, this reform has not been enacted. Because the Cappers are "verrey pou*er* men & haue no thynge to lyve by but their sayd occupac*i*on," they ask the council to either "see for due & lauffull reformac*i*on of the p*re*mysses or ell*es* to exon*er*ate and discharge theyme of & for the bryngynge forthe of the sayd playe" (*REED: Chester* 26). They claim that they "wolde be right sorye" to give up the pageant, and stress that "the remedye therof lyethe myche in yo*ur* maystershipp*es*." Should the council choose to aid them, the Cappers promise not only to bring forth the pageant, but to do so "in theire best man*ner*." They conclude by appealing to the council's charity, asking them again either to enact the requested reformation, "or ell*es* to take no displeasure w*ith* theyme if they for lakke of habilitie do not brynge forthe theire sayd play."

There is no doubt that the production of a pageant was a financial burden. Salter makes this point definitively in "A Day's Labour."[33] Despite the financial reality, however, the Cappers' petition reads as an overt bargaining ploy aimed at protecting the company's rights and increasing their likelihood of financial survival. They as much as admit that they have not put their best efforts into production, but they repeatedly stress that the future of their performances lies in the hands of the council. They also appeal to the council on several levels, asking them to honour a previous promise, enact "lawful" reform, and fulfill the Christian virtue of charity. They, in turn, claim they would be sad to give up the pageant, while presenting an ultimatum: reform the market, or lose the pageant. As a comparatively new craft, they needed reform in order to make their trade profitable.[34] The response appears to have included some conciliation—Morris excerpts orders protecting the Cappers' rights from 1524-5 and 1534-5—but only to the extent of preventing the Mercers from selling caps by the dozen for less than 12s (as opposed to the 16s that the Cappers state as a fair price). At the same time, the council appears to have undermined the Cappers' use of the pageant as a bargaining ploy by arranging for other funding. The 1539-40 list suggests an association with the Pinners and Wiredrawers, an association that surfaces again in the Midsummer Proclamation and which is confirmed both by the Early Banns (which mention only the Pinners) and by the 1603 record discussed above. The council saw the veiled threat for what it was, and chose to thwart it by ordering financial support for the pageant from other crafts rather than fully enforcing the requested reform.

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[33] The Smiths, for example, regularly spent between three and five pounds on their production, and more when the pageant wagon needed work. Salter contextualizes this expense by stating that a penny would be an acceptable wage for a day's labour, keeping in mind that there are 720 pennies in a pound (*Mediaeval* 78). In truth, a penny a day was the minimum wage, and those who earned it expected to receive food and drink along with their wages. Morris provides a chart of wages for the late Elizabethan period, which shows the highest daily wage, with food and drink, as four pennies per day (367-8). The highest without food and drink is twelve pennies, but most wages are between six and eight pennies. Even with these higher wages in mind, a production could cost the equivalent of a year's wages for those in lower income brackets.

The 1603 record states that this arrangement did not last. The Pinners and Wiredrawers were nominally still part of the company, but they no longer had adequate funds to support the pageant, and, eventually, the Linendrapers took their place. Like the Cappers, the Linendrapers were a young company. In the 1679 Petition, they claim that the company is an "ancient" one, confirmed by City Charter in "6 ED 6" (*REED: Chester* 317), or 1552-3. Their inclusion in the Late Banns suggests they joined with the Cappers in producing the pageant shortly after their own formation. The history of the

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[34] The Victoria County History volume for Chester (5.1) asserts "there was a distinct craft of cappers in the late 14th and early 15th century, later replaced by the feltcappers, who were well established by the 1480s and shared a guild with the skinners" (76). The simultaneous presence of both Cappers and Hatters or Headmakers (as in the 1539-40 list and the Midsummer Proclamation) suggests that the *VCH: Chester* summary glosses over the complexities of capping history in Chester. However, I assert the Cappers were a relatively new company in the sixteenth century, given that they were not previously established enough to appear in either the 1475-6 or 1500 lists and that they are still attempting to establish and defend a trade niche in 1523-4. Morris presents three orders concerning the sale of caps, but only the latter two, in 1524-5 and 1534-5, mention the Cappers as a company (435-6). The earlier order, in 1486-7, splits fines between the sheriffs and the common box of the city, whereas the latter two split the fines between the Stewards of the Cappers and the Treasurers of the city.

Bricklayers was probably similar. The 1679 Petition notes the Bricklayers were "admitted to joyn" in 1603 by order of the Mayor, suggesting that the Bricklayers may have sought this honour, rather than having it forced on them, but they were not up to the honour they had sought. As a result of the Linendrapers' Petition, the Bricklayers were removed from the company. All of this suggests that the pageant of *Moses* and *Balack* became something of a showcase for rising trades, a testing ground for each craft's ability to present itself as a stable, contributing company of the city.

Painters and the Heraldic Tradition: Maintaining Civic Status

The crafts responsible for the *Shepherds* pageant, the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers,[35] similarly came late to the production, but discussions of their involvement are remarkably inconsistent. Most scholars have identified the isolated 1515-16 performance of "the shepards play . . . played in St Iohns churchyard" (*REED: Chester* 23-4) as a performance of the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers' pageant, but interpretations of this performance differ. Clopper theorizes that "The performance at St. John's may indicate the painters' play was new" ("History" 227 n. 27), while Lumiansky and Mills argue that "the Painters . . . had borne responsibility for the *Shepherds* in some form for some time before 1515-16" but after 1500 (*E&D* 172, 174). In addition, Salter's interpretation of two notes in one of the Holme manuscript collections, Harley 2054, leads him to conclude that "The Painters separated from the Barbers . . . before 1485" ("Banns" 13) and that they had taken up their pageant "Before 1488" (16). There are clearly problems with our understanding of this company's history in the cycle.

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[35] The Company Charter includes Stationers, but this craft is never mentioned with respect to the play.

In order to clarify this history, I must first explain something of the nature of the company. The Victoria County History volume for Chester uncertainly concludes that the "glaziers shared a guild with stainers and painters, all of whom presumably worked most commonly for ecclesiastical patrons" (78). This theory, however, does not fit with the company's continued survival and prosperity after the dissolution. The three crafts involved are all related as decorative arts, but it is Salter who hints at the reason for the company's central purpose when he comments in passing that "The Painters were a wealthy guild in the sixteenth century, and, incidentally, the guild to which the several Randle Holme's belonged" ("Banns" 456). The Holme family members (1571-1701) were not only painters, but specifically heraldic painters as well as deputy heralds (*VCH: Chester* 108, 143). Moreover, Randle Holme I married the widow of the previous deputy herald, Thomas Chaloner, who was entered into the Freedom as a painter in 1583-4 (Bennett 59).[36] Other details in *REED: Chester* records confirm the Painters' emphasis on heraldic activities: Clopper notes two contracts (in 1563-4 and 1627-8) with painters who organized portions of the midsummer show, and a payment from the City Treasurers to the Painters in 1554-5 may indicate a similar arrangement (*REED: Chester* 55, 71-2, 381-2).[37] Moreover, the accounts for 1567-8 reveal that the company consisted of an elite group. The account states,

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[36] Mills mentions the Painters' connection to Heralds in passing in *Recycling the Cycle* (177). W. Williams Mortimer discusses the Holme family in more depth in "Memoir of the Family of Home," and he is generally critical of the way this family fulfilled their civic and heraldic duties. Mortimer identifies Randle Holme I as "Deputy to the College of Arms for Cheshire" (88), Randle Holme II as "Deputy Norroy" (89), and Randle Holme III as "Deputy Garter-at-Arms for the Counties of Chester, Salop, and Lancaster, and also for North Wales" (90).

[37] The first contract is with "Thomas Poole and Robrt halwod of the citie aforesaid Painter*es*" (*REED: Chester* 71) to provide a number of fantastic creatures in exchange for 40s per year. The second is a more complicated record of transactions involving the first Randle Holme (the Alderman of the company) and the painters Nicholas Hallwood and Robert Thorneley. These three and a fourth, then deceased, owned

> The hole some of the whytsone playes And all the Charg*es* of oure occupacyon excepte quarteryg*es* from Saynt lededaye vntyll the vth of July ys iiij li. ij s vj d wyche ys for euery brother—v s vi d. (*REED: Chester* 84)

The division of £4 2s 6d by 5s 6d suggests a total of fifteen members. As a comparison, in the same year, the Smiths list thirty-eight members who generally pay 2s 2d each towards the pageant (*REED: Chester* 84-5), less than half of the Painters' average contributions. The limited yet prosperous membership indicates that the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers are a specialized and significant group.

The nature of this company's membership helps explain the notes associating the Painters and Barbers that lead Salter to posit an earlier relationship between the two companies. In Harley 2054, Holme writes, "Wee were in witson plays in our pagent so called & somtyme painters & assisted by others not now ioyned with vs" and "Before H 7 tyme the were a society of painters & barbers" (qtd. in Salter, "Banns" 456). The first person "Wee" signals Holme's personal interest in tracing the genealogy of his company, not a surprising activity for a herald. There is, however, no evidence that the Barbers and Painters were ever associated in the fifteenth century. On the other hand, the two companies were developing a relationship in the seventeenth century, when Holme was writing. A summary of the Barber Surgeons Company Book notes the presence of an "account of charges paid by the Barber Surgeons, Wax and Tallowchandlers, and the Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers and Stationers toward the repair of their meeting house,

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and maintained the Midsummer giants which the city rented for the Show at "the ordinary and accustmed fees" (*REED: Chester* 381), an arrangement begun in John Ratcliff's mayoralty (1601-2 or 1611-12). The contract deals primarily with the distribution of these fees as the initial four grow too old to maintain the giants, and arranges to sell the shares to John Wright, painter. In both cases, the people involved appear to be acting as individuals (rather than on behalf of the company), but these contracts are also representative of heraldic activities.

'The Goulden phenex,' c.1612" (*A2A* G2/1), and other records confirm the connection of these two companies to the meeting house (*A2A* G7/36, ZA/F/15/34). Moreover, in 1613-14, the Tallow Chandlers complained to the Mayor

> That whereas yt is an order Auncient in the said companye that vpon the kinges holy dayes. and At the watch vpon midsomer even. that we the said Tallowchaundlers and barbers: shoulde attende to gether. vpon your wors*hip* and vpon other maiors for the tyme beinge the said barbers at such tymes: doth vtterly refuse vs. and doth Companye themselves. w*i*th the pa..ters grasiors ymbroderers and Stacioners and leaves vs. beinge few in nomber. to our greate greiffe. (*REED: Chester* 281)

The two companies shared a meeting space and the Barbers were developing a relationship with the socially well-situated Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers' company to the exclusion of their previous relationship with the Chandlers. The exact reasons for this transition are not evident, but the shift of craft name from Barbers to Barber Surgeons suggests increasing professionalization and an emphasis on the more academic, medical aspects of the trade, which might give its members reason to prefer the more intellectual heraldic painters over the manufacturing chandlers.[38] Given these shifting relationships in Holme's time and the lack of evidence for a relationship between these crafts earlier, it is likely that Holme's comments are examples of wishful thinking or, at worst, genealogical manipulation. Holme is seeking historic precedent for a relationship with the Barbers to justify the one developing in his own time.

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[38] The Barbers are only called Barber Surgeons in the Midsummer Proclamation, and it is Holme who adds "Surgeons" as a gloss to "leeches" in the 1539-40 list, suggesting that the association with a more dedicated medical profession is primarily a seventeenth-century phenomenon in Chester. The company's civic charters from 1540 and 1550 are still extant and would help confirm the nature of the company prior to the seventeenth century.

This still leaves uncertainty as to when and why the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers chose to enter the cycle. Although I can agree with Clopper, and Lumiansky and Mills, that the company's absence from the 1500 list means they did not adopt the pageant until after 1500, the 1515-16 performance is ambiguous. Scholars only know that the pageant was performed, not who performed it. The record in full reads, "the shepards play & the Assumption of our lady was played in St Iohns churchyard" (*REED: Chester* 23-4). Details surrounding the *Assumption* pageant suggest another possible interpretation for this particular performance of the *Shepherds* pageant. The *Assumption* had been performed as a separate performance twice before, in 1489-90 and in 1498-9 (for Lord Strange and Prince Arthur respectively), and it has an unusual status with respect to the cycle.[39] The 1500 List of Crafts, includes "Þe Wyfus of þe town assumpc*ion* be*at*e marie" (*REED: Chester* 23), and the Early Banns confirm that the "wurshipfull wyffys of this towne / ffynd of our Lady thassumpcion" (*REED: Chester* 37).[40] The 1539-40 List of Participating Crafts, however, suggests that "On corpus chr*ist*i day the collegis and prestys bryng forth A play at the Assentement of the Maire" (*REED: Chester* 260). Since the 1539-40 list is prescriptive, it may not correctly attribute the performance of the *Assumption*, but it does suggest that the pageant was connected with a different kind of community group. The common factor may be religious, as opposed to secular, association. St. John's, the site of the 1515-16 *Shepherds* and *Assumption* performance, was a collegiate church, which suggests a connection to the 1539-40 list's description of a pageant as being performed by the colleges and priests.[41] Similarly, the wives may represent a parish association of the kind which grouped community members on the basis of gender, age, and marital status.[42] If the *Assumption* can be seen as the contribution of particular religious communities to the civic cycle, then it may be that the *Shepherds* pageant, performed alongside the *Assumption* in 1515-16, had a similar religious origin, and only later became the purview of a civic company.[43] In any case, it is possible that the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers were not responsible for the performance in 1515-16.

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[39] Salter thinks the performance before Prince Arthur was actually of the Smiths' *Purification* pageant, and not the *Assumption* (*Mediaeval* 50).

[40] Holme notes in the Midsummer Proclamation, "If any Iustice of peace be of the company of any society then called the wor*shipfu*ll" (*REED: Chester* 474). It is possible that "wurshipfull wyffys" similarly suggests an association with justices of the peace or with other members of civic administration, although Holme's retrospective explanation requires scrutiny.

The one document which provides a fixed date for this company is the Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers, and Stationers' Charter of 1534-5. At the request of the four groups, they are incorporated as "one speciall c*om*pany of þe s*ai*d citty" because they have been "tyme out of minde one Brotherhood for the costs & Expences of þe plae of þe shepp*er*ds Wach with þe Angells hyme & likewayes for otherr layinge out conserninge þe wellferr & prosperetie of þe saide citty" (*REED: Chester* 30). This record demonstrates a radically different attitude from that of the Cappers' petition in 1523-4: it betrays no financial bargaining and instead foregrounds the city's prosperity as the company's ultimate goal, simultaneously acknowledging the status of city company as desirable. The description of the company in the Early Banns equally emphasizes their willing participation in the cycle:

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[41] The *VCH: Chester* suggests St. John's was "The religious community which enjoyed closest relations with the citizens" (83).

[42] Miri Rubin provides several examples of local associations based on gender, age, and marital status in "Small Groups" (141).

[43] Lumiansky and Mills note that both the *Assumption* and *Shepherds* pageants have similarly irregular stanzas in the Early Banns, and they suggest that this may be because both pageants were "upon occasion abstracted from the cycle for individual presentation" (*E&D* 178). Perhaps the similar stanza form also indicates similar origins for these two pageants.

> Paynters glasiars & borderers in fere
> Haue taken on theym *with* full good chere
> That the Sheppard*es* play then shall appere
> And that with right good wyll. (*REED: Chester* 35)

The Tanners and Cooks are also exhorted to bring forth their pageant with "good chere" (34, 37), but the Tanners are "full prest" to do so, while the Cooks must "find" their pageant. The Banns suggest, in contrast, that the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers have actively sought their pageant, and the double emphasis of good cheer and good will both contribute to a sense that the company wants the pageant for its own sake, not as part of a financial negotiation or externally imposed civic obligation. If the company's central function was heraldic, then participation in civic ceremonial is in keeping with the company's identity and purpose.[44]

As to when the company took on their pageant, I can be no more specific than to say that they adopted the pageant between 1500 and 1534. The charter's assertion that they have produced the pageant "tyme out of minde" is ambiguous. It is worth noting, however, that Henry VIII reinstated the position of Chester Herald in the College of Arms in 1525 ("Origin"). The answers to the motivations of their entrance to the cycle may lie in the origins of heraldry in the city.

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[44] This is not to suggest that their participation was not also financially motivated. The best way to demonstrate the company's ability to organize spectacle and pageantry is to produce a sample pageant, and the *Shepherds* pageant presents a range of modes and styles, from slapstick comedy and wrestling to angelic choruses and somber gift-giving. It is an ideal show-piece.

The company's ability both to manipulate their own representation of identity and to play to the council's ideal for civic identity was ultimately more successful than the Cappers', since they receive the requested charter and appear to maintain relative stability thereafter. It is true that the Embroiderers are not mentioned in the Late Banns and two of the play manuscripts, while the other three manuscripts only attribute the pageant to the Painters, and that the Stationers are never referenced in relation to the pageant, but these appear to be instances of short-hand, referring to the company by the name of its dominant craft.[45] Company petitions to the city in 1603-4 and 1630, protecting the rights of the Embroiderers (*A2A* ZM/L/2/172) and Stationers (*A2A* ZA/F/15/34) respectively, demonstrate the continued importance of these crafts to the company.

Mercers, Vintners, and Merchants: Pageant Sponsorship as a Tactic of Separation

Salter and Clopper both read the irregular stanza form of the Early Banns surrounding the description of the Vintners' and Mercers' pageants as evidence that a previously united pageant was divided between these two groups. Salter states, "It would seem that when the Early Banns were first written, there existed only one pageant of the Wise Men performed by the Vintners and Mercers. This pageant was later divided, and a new stanza inserted in the Banns to announce the new situation" ("Banns" 451). Clopper similarly asserts that "we can safely conclude that the mercers and the vintners were joined in one pageant . . . at the time that the Early Banns were originally composed" ("History" 229). Both scholars also agree that the Vintners must have gained their portion of the pageant by 1531-2, when the craft agreed to share a pageant wagon with the Dyers and the Goldsmiths and Masons (Salter, "Banns" 3-4; Clopper, "History" 229-31). Lumiansky and Mills read the evidence of the Banns differently (*E&D* 178-80), and they argue that the Vintners had taken up the content of their pageant by 1500, since they are included in the 1500 list (173-4). Yet none of these discussions explain why the pageant was divided in the first place. As Salter complains, the two pageants "are just a little absurd by themselves" ("Banns" 2).[46] Scholars must look closer at the history of these companies to understand why they divided the pageant, and what this division symbolizes with respect to craft identity.

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[45] In "The Stationers, Booksellers and Printers of Chester to About 1800," R. Stewart-Brown notes that the "first-recorded Chester 'stationer'" (107) was admitted to the company in 1592. Thomas Hughes similarly suggests that few if any company members practiced solely as Stationers (22). It is likely that members diversified among the company's crafts, and that the craft names associated with pageant production reflect the members' primary activities.

Salter and Clopper both acknowledge that the Mercers were the older company. Clopper simply states, "The vintners were once part of the guild mercatory before they separated from the mercers" ("History" 229), but Salter goes further: "The Merchant Vinters . . . would unquestionably at one time belong to the Mercers' organization. The latter were general import and export traders, the core of the ancient *gilda mercatoria*, while the Merchant Vintners were specifically importers of wine" ("Banns" 2). These confident statements elide a rather complex economic history. It is true that Chester's economic core was founded in a guild merchant, but that institution was under threat by the mid-fourteenth century and had come to represent non-citizen traders by 1452 (*VCH: Chester* 28, 58, 61), whereas the Mercers were renting land as a company by 1437-8. More significantly, the *VCH: Chester* asserts that those shipping wine "were rarely described as vintners" (74) and that "They were not . . . specialist wine merchants" (53). Morris similarly states that "the names of vintners occur but seldom" (432). A simple division of Mercers and Vintners begins to look a bit more complicated.

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[46] Salter actually suggests that the Mercers, Vintners, and Goldsmiths might have shared a single pageant presenting the three wise men and the slaughter of the innocents, but the Goldsmiths had a long history of being a separate company. George Omerod suggests a pre-Norman connection between Goldsmiths and an assay office in Chester (228), and the *VCH: Chester* suggests that "Goldsmiths played an important part in city life from an early date . . . . [A]t least seven may be identified, for example, in the decade 1292-1302" (52). Given this long, independent history, it seems unlikely that the Goldsmiths would have shared a pageant with another craft.

An exploration of the history of trading occupations in Chester clarifies the shifting relationships between these occupations over time and helps to explain the pageant ascriptions. Mercers were significant participants in the city, socially, economically, and politically, but they appear to have handled a wider range of trade than the fine cloth usually associated with mercery.[47] The *VCH: Chester* provides the example of a "late 13th and early 14th century" family that "not only traded in cloth but had a boat on the Dee" (52), while later inventories included "ribbons, points (laces for fastening clothing), spices, and paper" (76), commodities usually sold by Spicers and Stationers.[48] In Chester, the word "mercer" appears to have been a general term covering both wholesale and retail (or long-distance and local) trade. This general terminology reflects Chester's comparatively restricted trading activity during the time in which Chester companies began to develop. The *VCH: Chester* notes that Chester's overseas trade "declined after the 1420s, reached its nadir in the 1470s, and began to improve in the 1490s" (68). Given the repressed overseas trade of the fifteenth century, it is reasonable that those few merchants who conducted overseas trading would associate with other, more local traders, and were perhaps local traders in their own rights as well. After the 1490s, however, evidence from the Freemen Rolls suggests that an increase in trading opportunities resulted in a gradual division between Merchants, representing long-distance trade, and Mercers, representing retail.

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[47] The *OED* defines "mercer" as "A person who deals in textile fabrics, esp. silks, velvets, and other fine materials; . . . . Also (occas.): a dealer in haberdashery" (def. 1).

[48] *VCH: Chester* notes that "Few of the city's merchants traded as specialist spicers or grocers, and their commodities may have been sold by mercers" (74).

Prior to 1500, freemen in the trading occupations registered almost exclusively as Mercers.[49] After 1500, however, registration exhibits a remarkable pattern:

Table 2: Chester Mercers and Merchants in the Freemen Rolls (1500-1555)[50]

	Mercers	Merchants
1500-1		
1504-5	1	1
1505-6		1
1506-7		1
1507-8		2
1510-11		5
1520-1		1
1522-3	1	2
1526-7	1	
1527-8	2	
1530-1	2	
1531-2	1	
1532-3	2	3
1533-4		1
1536-7		1
1537-8		2
1538-9		1
1540-1	2	1
1541-2		
1542-3	1	1
1543-4		1
1544-5	1	
1545-6		
1546-7		
1547		1
1547-8		
1548-9	1	4
1549-50		
1550-1		1
1551-2		1
1552-3		6
1553-4		7
1554-5		6
1555-6	1	2
1556-7	3	1
1557-8	1	7

For the first forty years of the sixteenth century the two trades generally appear to alternate, with occasional overlaps as the trend shifts from one trade to the other. While mercers are entered, merchants generally are not, and when freemen register as merchants, there are few mercers in the Rolls. The reasons for (and proof of) this alternation require further research, but it may suggest a coordinated effort in recruitment or generational divisions of labour in trading families.[51] In the 1540s, however, this pattern begins to break down, and after 1554-5, it disappears altogether. Starting in 1555-6, there are mercers and merchants listed nearly every year. This switch in enrollment patterns coincides with the official separation of the two trade activities as enforced by the Royal Charter of the Mere Merchants. This charter of 1554 allowed citizens "who have exercised the art or mystery of Merchant Venturers for the last seven years past" to be "one body corporate" and excluded non-members from participating in overseas trade (Morris 464). The fact that this was a royal charter and not a civic one signals that those involved had taken a civically unsanctioned stance, and, indeed, the charter was immediately contested by the city in support of the retailers who also had an interest in long-distance trade. The issue was not settled until 1589, when the Privy Council decided that the Mere Merchants could

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[49] There are two merchants registered, one in 1459-60 and one in 1483-4, as compared to fifteen mercers between 1500 and 1554.

[50] I have compiled the information in this table from my analysis of the Chester Freemen's Rolls. There are gaps in the entries prior to 1540, limiting analysis to general trends. There are, for example, no extant entries from 1512 to 1519.

> together withe there trade of marchandize use the benefit of retaylinge in some one trade to wit ether to be a drapere, marcer, vintener, Iremonger, or suche . . . and alsoe that all retaylors within the said Citie . . . may likewise be at there libertie to use the same trade [of merchandising] togethere with there retaylinge. (Morris 467)

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[51] That it, a mercer might apprentice his son as a merchant in order to ensure the supply of his retail wares, and his son would in turn apprentice the next generation as a mercer to guarantee an outlet for his merchandise. More detailed work with the Freemen Rolls and other archives would facilitate an exploration of familial and contractual relationships and potentially explain the alternating pattern of mercer and merchant entries. As well, the evidence in the Freemen Rolls needs to be collated with other records, particularly with respect to the large gap between 1510 and 1520. D. M. Palliser has also supplied the Cheshire Archives with a typescript of a "Revised List of Chester Freemen" which I have not had the opportunity to consult.

The catch was that anyone who was a member of both the Mere Merchants and a retailing craft had to contribute to the charges of both companies.[52]

By the late sixteenth century, then, the division between merchandising and retailing was permanent, a situation reflected in the Midsummer Proclamation. The Mercers and Merchants are the only companies to change their positions in the Proclamation in relation to the order established by the play-related lists. The two companies are listed together in the 1539-40 list and the Late Banns, but in the Proclamation, the Mercers move down to join the Ironmongers, another retailing trade, and the Merchants unite with the Mariners at the end of the list, a connection emphasizing overseas trade.[53] What was once a group defined by its common interest in trade grew over a century into two specialized companies.

I must now return to the division of Mercers and Vintners in the play. Salter refers to the latter group as Merchant Vintners, adopting the somewhat ambiguous "marchantes vinteners" of the Late Banns.[54] The 1539-40 list (and Holme's marginalia in the Early Banns) also suggests a connection between Vintners and Merchants, but Vintners alone is by far the dominant ascription: All five extant texts identify the Vintners as responsible for the first of the *Three Kings* pageants, and Vintners are listed separately in the 1500 list and the Early Banns. However, as historians have asserted, few traders were exclusively involved in wine, and the paucity of self-identified Vintners in the early sixteenth century belies the possibility of a separate and self-sufficient company. As a solution to this paradox, I suggest the possibility that the Vintners' and Merchants' companies are the same company.

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[52] It would be worthwhile to see if any Chester citizens did make these double payments. The first step would be to compile a list of contributors or potential contributors from the Freemen Rolls and company accounts.

[53] The Merchants and Mariners were associated as early as July 13, 1528, when the Franciscans "granted the nave and three aisles of their church to the merchants and sailors of Chester for a place to store and repair sails and other things requisite for their ships. The merchants were to undertake all the repairs of the church" (Morris 143). Perhaps this kind of arrangement is what fostered the development of the two groups into a single company.

[54] Lumiansky and Mills also read the term in the Late Banns as "Merchant-Vintners" (*E&D* 197), but the marginalia in Roger's manuscript identifies "The worthie Marchantes and Vinteners playe" (*REED: Chester* 243), and the words in the Banns may be eliding an "and" or could represent the possessive "Merchants' Vintners."

Beyond the later association of Merchants and Vintners in play-related documents, there are reasons to suspect that the city's merchants would initially have gone under the name of Vintners. The specific identification of the Merchants as Vintners may have had a bureaucratic origin. In the eyes of both palatinate and civic administration, wine was one of the few commodities distinguishable from other merchandise as subject to specific customs. Merchant trade was "predominantly in importing iron and wine and exporting hides and cloth" (*VCH: Chester* 68), but, with few exceptions, citizens paid a minimal flat-rate toll for every ship they brought to port (Wilson 14). The longest standing exception was the importation of wine. By the late thirteenth century, wine was subject to a prise, or tax, of "1 tun on ships laden with between 10 and 20 tuns and 2 tuns on ships with a cargo of 20 tuns or more" (Wilson 4-5), with the profits accruing to the Earl. In contrast, Chester never traded enough wool to make participation in the national wool customs worthwhile, and merchants only began paying national customs on iron and leather in 1464-5 and 1537-8 respectively (Wilson 5-6). Similarly, "Wine was the only item of merchandise to be singled out for a specific customs duty" (Wilson 11) in the civic customs. By c. 1400, Chester claimed "to have custom of every ship entering the liberties of the city," but the schedule of rates specifies only a custom of 4d per ton of wine; all other merchandise is generically rated at 4d per cartload (Wilson 143). It was not until the 1530s that a more detailed schedule of rates set down customs for other commodities, and, even then, wine headed the list along with iron and oil (Wilson 144-5).

Chester was not a major importer of wine on a national scale, but it had a local history of such imports. The *VCH: Chester* demonstrates that the wine trade in particular followed the overall growth of long-distance trade in the early fifteenth century: "wine imports doubled from 1,131 tuns in 1490-1500 to a peak of 2,451 in 1510-20. Imports remained high in the 1520s and 1530s before falling to 698 tuns in the 1540s" (71) and the wine trade in this period "was dominated by Chester freemen" (74). It is also in the 1539-40 list that the name "Merchants" first appears in association with the Vintners and the pageant. As the wine trade decreased in the 1540s, the merchants, who were already shipping a wide range of products, would have increasingly diversified their imports, encouraging the adoption of a more general craft term, particularly in a civic document which existed to enforce financial contribution to the play. The term does not, however, appear in the descriptive lists until the Late Banns. Intriguingly, Clopper suggests that the Late Banns were composed and revised between 1548 and 1572 ("History" 233, 240), a range of dates inclusive of the Mere Merchants' incorporation in 1554. The parallel history of these two trades, the historical absence of dedicated vintners, and the significance of wine imports on an administrative level suggest that the Merchants and Vintners were the same group from the start.[55]

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[55] It is not clear from the records available for this study whether the name of Vintners was voluntary or externally imposed. The paucity of self-styled Vintners in the Freemen Rolls may suggest that the term was civically determined, but a 1531-2 pageant sharing agreement refers to the Vintners as an occupation with stewards, which argues for a more voluntary identification.

The presence of the Vintners in the 1500 list, whether seen as evidence of the Vintners' entry into the cycle (Lumiansky and Mills, *E&D* 174) or simply the growing distinction between types of trade, signals the beginnings of specialization among traders and the nascent development of separate craft identities. The Vintners' adoption of their pageant is one aspect of this redefinition of identity, one which is both the result and cause of craft separation. The division of the original *Three Kings* pageant would have been symptomatic of the growing division between the two trades and provided each with a separate vehicle (literally, in the case of pageant wagons) through which to represent their identities. The economic responsibility of funding the pageants would in turn have encouraged traders to associate with one group or the other in order to avoid contributing twice, and this would have fostered an even stronger sense of division. While it is possible that the two "halves" of the pageant may have been initially produced and funded together, the Vintners' independent arrangements to share a pageant wagon in 1531-2 confirm that the two groups had become separate entities by that point at the latest. The rift between the two groups was formally acknowledged with the incorporation of the Mere Merchants in 1554, but we can see, through the medium of the Chester play, how the negotiation of these separate identities began thirty to fifty years earlier.

Blacksmiths and Other Metal Trades: Pageant Sponsorship as a Unifying Force

Whereas the pageants could serve to facilitate the division of crafts along lines of specialization, they could also encourage the association of crafts employing similar activities or materials. The history of the crafts presenting the *Purification* provides one example of this pattern. The association of the Smiths with other metal working trades in the lists and in records excerpted by REED suggests a struggle over identity, one which ultimately came to rest on commonalties rather than differences. All five texts of the play indicate that Blacksmiths were responsible for the pageant dealing with the *Purification* and *Christ Before the Doctors*, while the Banns and 1500 list corroborate a longstanding association of the Smiths with this pageant.[56] The 1475-6 List of Apprenticeship Fees and the Midsummer Proclamation confirm the continuity of the Smiths' company. On this basis, the craft's responsibility seems straightforward.

Other records, however, identify more specific distinctions among the metal working trades who sponsored this pageant. In particular, a contract from 1521 asserts that the Founders and Pewterers are a separate company or occupation from the Smiths, but that both crafts will contribute "to whitson playe & Corpus Christi light & to bere to the fyndyng of the p*re*ste of Seynt loye Chapell and all other Cost*es* as they of olde tyme haue donne & vsed" (*REED: Chester* 24).[57] This arrangement implies that the two companies were once united, but every effort is made to identify the two groups as separate occupations—they possess their own stewards, aldermen, and seals. The continued assignment of the pageant to the Smiths suggests that they were the older company, and that the Founders and Pewterers were permitted to split from the larger group in or before 1521 on the condition that they continue to share their communal financial obligations. The emphasis of the agreement is on the financial support of the chapel—profits reported at the end of each year are to go to the chapel alone—but the significance of the agreement is in its careful balance of separate identity with communal responsibility. The same sense of distinction reappears in the 1539-40 prescriptive list, where the Smiths are associated with the Pewterers and Furbishers. It is not clear whether the Furbishers, who were later known as Cutlers,[58] were also seen as a separate group, although their absence from other play-related lists suggests that they were.[59] The 1539-40 list, then, displays an awareness of at least three separate metal working groups which might be expected to support the pageant.[60] By the Midsummer Proclamation, the situation has changed again. More distinctions have been added: the Cutlers, Cardmakers, and Plumbers, and possibly the Spurriers, Girdlers, and Hatmakers, although the latter three are in Holme's hand, and so possibly reflect an even later association. Nevertheless, these crafts are listed as a single group along with the Smiths and Pewterers.[61] The implication is that the metal working trades are seen as a unit and that the crafts which were divided in 1521 had rejoined by the end of the century.

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[56] Clopper ("History" 223) and Lumiansky and Mills (*E&D* 191) both note that the content of the Smiths' pageant shifted from the *Purification of the Virgin* to the two episodes of the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple* and *Christ and the Doctors*. Both suggest the suppression of the Corpus Christi feast in 1548 as the cause. I can find no reason for the name change from Smiths to Blacksmiths. "Smith" is the generic term, whereas the *OED* defines "Blacksmith" as "A smith who works in iron or black metal, as distinguished from a 'whitesmith' who works in tin or white metal" (def. 1a). These more specific terms are rare in the Chester records.

[57] Founders and Pewterers both make objects by casting metal, the former usually working with copper or brass and the latter with pewter. See chapters 4 and 5 on "Tin, Lead and pewter" and "Cooper Alloys" in *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*.

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[58] Holme suggests this alternate terminology when he adds and then deletes "or Cutlers" after "ffurbours" in the 1539-40 list. His action suggests that he had not initially recognized the archaic spelling of Furbishers. Confirmation of interchangeable terminology exists in the Freemen Rolls where Richard and William Richardson, alias Locker, are identified first as Furbishers (in 1568-9 and 1575-6 respectively) and later as Cutlers (in 1582-3).

[59] Companies which incorporated several crafts, such as the Barbers and Wax Chandlers or the Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers, are listed fairly consistently.

[60] There is a fourth in the list—the Bellfounders, who are listed with the Hewsters. Since the Bellfounders are almost certainly the Founders, who were joined with the Pewterers in 1521, this suggests either that the compiler of the list was either unaware of the connection or that the craft had further fragmented between 1521 and 1539-40.

[61] They are not, however, described as a company. Of twenty six entries in the Proclamation, five are not described as companies, the other four being the Barbers and Chandlers, the Cappers *et alia*, the Wrights and Slaters, and the Cooks and Innholders. Given that all five are said to have aldermen and stewards, and that at least three are described as companies in other records, it is likely that they are all companies.

One record excerpted in *REED: Chester* (473) and in *Essays and Documents* (212) both clarifies and confuses the picture of this company's developing identity.[62] An undated record from one of Holme's collections is identified as coming from the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Account Book. It asserts a broad association of anyone working in metal, including Smiths, Furbishers, Cutlers, Pewterers, Founders and "the rest of their associates" (473), who specifically came together as one company to produce the pageant, and later the Midsummer Show. The record is, on the whole, unreliable. It repeats discredited myths of origin which associate the Chester play with Sir John Arneway and Ranulf Higden, and erroneously attributes the foundation of the Midsummer Show to Richard Dutton instead of Richard Goodman.[63] The record also curiously stresses twice that the play originated "in tyme of K H 3 about 410 yeares since" and "about 50 H 3 1266" (472). This emphasis explains something of the entry's rationale. Clopper states,

> The manuscript is defective at this point. Holme had numbered the folio as 30 originally but the preceding one is numbered 21; consequently the entry appears either to begin in the middle of a document, a chapter, or perhaps it is simply a note. In any event, the book that he says he was copying from had the date 1499 on its first leaf. (*REED: Chester* 532)

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[62] Lumiansky and Mills identify the document as an abstract of the Smiths' Charter, while Clopper specifies that it is an entry in the Account Book. My analysis of this document is, of necessity, conjectural and relies on these scholars' interpretations of the surrounding material.

[63] Arneway was mayor in 1268-76, while Higden was a monk at the abbey from 1299-1364. See Salter (*Mediaeval* 32-42) and Lumiansky and Mills (*E&D* 166-8) for further discussion. Richard Dutton served as mayor in 1567-8 and 1574-5, not in 1498, the date asserted by the record. However, Dutton was associated with civic entertainment—there is a record of him holding an open house with a "lorde of misrule" (*REED: Chester* 80)—which may explain why the two Richards were mistaken for one another.

If, as Clopper suggests, the record comes from the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' first Account Book, it would have to date from before 1637, the opening date of the extant second account book for this company. 410 years from 1266 is 1676, and, as such, coincides better with the years in which Holme was active as an antiquarian. This suggests, then, that the entry is not a copy of a record but is rather Holme's attempt to work out the chronology of union among the metal trades one hundred years after the play was set aside. The longer exploration of this union on folio 25 is condensed on folio 26, where Holme writes "the Company of Smyth ffurbors & pewterers Ioyned in the play . . . after w*hi*ch tyme others tooke p*ar*t w*ith* them as mettall men vilzt" (473). If "vilzt" can be read as "videlicet" (i.e "namely as metal men"), then the entry reveals Holme puzzling the connections reflected in the Midsummer Show of his own day. He did, after all, add the Spurriers, Girdlers, and Hatmakers to the Midsummer Proclamation, suggesting that these groups were associated with a company of metal trades at a later date. Holme appears again to be acting in his genealogical role as herald, tracing the existing company as far back as possible and suggesting a common reason for the amalgamation.

While this record reveals very little about the actual history of the metal trades in relation to the *Purification* pageant, it does confirm an eventual understanding of the metal trades as a single company, one unified by their common materials. The question is when these groups began acting together again as a company. A partial answer is provided by the extant accounts for the Smiths' pageant in conjunction with evidence from the Freemen Rolls. In 1560-1, 1566-7, and 1567-8, the Smiths' accounts list the names of the contributing brethren. Of the fifty-three men and women named in these lists, thirty-nine can be identified by craft according to entries in the Freemen Rolls. Just over half of the identifiable craftsmen are smiths, while the remaining members represent a range of metal working trades.

Table 3: Identifiable Brethren in Chester Metal Trades (1560-1578)[64]

Craft	Number
Smiths	22
Pewterers	7
Founders	3
Cardmakers	3
Furbishers/Cutlers[65]	2
Girdlers	1
Plumbers	1
Total	39

Of the twenty-three identifiable brethren in the 1560-1 list alone, thirteen are smiths and the remaining ten represent other metal working trade. By 1560-1 at the latest, then, the crafts which had agreed to operate separately in 1521 and which were potentially still separate in 1539-40 had become a single company again, one which did indeed represent "mettall men vilzt."

Between the Smiths and Pewterers agreement of 1520, and what is potentially Holme's 1676 analysis of the metal trades' history, there is a sense of division, separation, and eventual re-association of crafts facilitated by their participation in civic ceremonial activities, including both the Chester play and the Midsummer Show. In the history of these crafts, their continued participation in the same pageant, despite a temporary separation, reinforced a sense of unity that these crafts later achieved by re-uniting as a single company. In contrast, when another civic ceremonial, the Midsummer Show, was suppressed in 1678 (*VCH: Chester* 144), the sense of unity once again dissolved: in 1681, the Pewterers requested that they be allowed to separate from the Smiths, Cutlers, Cardmakers, and Plumbers and to form their own company (*A2A* ZA/B/2/194v-195). Just as participation in civic ceremonials could help a company divide, as it did with the Merchants and Mercers, it could also provide the common experience which united the members of disparate crafts, negotiating an identity founded as much on commonality as on difference.

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[64] This table is a summary of my detailed comparison of the Freemen's Rolls with the names excerpted in *REED: Chester* from the Smiths' accounts.

[65] The two men entered in the Freemen Rolls as Furbishers or Cutlers also entered aliases, so it is not certain whether they are the same men listed in the Smiths' accounts.

Resisting the Cycle: Further Discoveries through Historical Context

In addition to enriching our understanding of the role that pageant sponsorship played in identity negotiation, explorations of craft history can also reveal associations which resisted involvement in the cycle. For example, the first evidence of a cycle play in Chester contains a riddle that an historical approach both highlights and helps to solve. Among the Coopers' Records is a document from 1421-2 detailing a dispute between the Ironmongers and Carpenters over the financial support of the Fletchers, Bowers, Stringers, Coopers, and Turners with respect to the play. An inquest at Portmote concluded that each group had its own pageant to support "according to the original made of it (ie, the play)" (*REED: Chester* 493), a situation in keeping with the extant texts over a century and a half later. If, however, the Carpenters performed the *Nativity* (as they did in later years under the name of Wrights), and the other two groups performed the two sections of the *Passion* (as asserted in the court's decision and the extant texts), then the source of the initial dispute is unclear. Why would they go to court over assignments that were easily confirmed by reference to the play's original? The answer lies in the Turners' presence. Of all the trades involved in the dispute, it is the Turners who disappear from the later lists. They are mentioned in the 1539 list along with the Bowers, Fletchers, Stringers, and Coopers but the logic of this association is simply that if they supported the pageant once, they might be enforced to do so again. More importantly, they are not associated with the barrel and bowmen in any other list. When they do resurface, it is with the newly formed Joiners, Carvers, and Turners' company in the Midsummer Proclamation. The Joiners and Carvers had requested separation from the Wrights and Slaters in 1576 (Morris 404), and received a charter in 1578 (G14/8/1), but there is no evidence of the Turners' status between 1421 and their inclusion in the newly formed company in 1578. These details suggest that the original 1421-2 dispute was over a group of woodworkers who had evaded the Carpenters' control.[66] The Turners participation in the *Trial and Flagellation* was potentially only a temporary engagement, one that allowed them to resist re-absorption by their parent occupation. When the Portmote confirmed that separation, it tacitly gave permission for the Turners to develop as a separate craft, one which was never again involved with the Chester play. The defection of the Turners may also explain why the Carpenters later became known as Wrights, a term which connotes large-scale construction as opposed to encompassing all wood-work generally. Certainly by the 1539-40 list, there is a sense that the Wrights are primarily a building trade, since that list pairs them with Slaters, Tilers, Daubers, and Thatchers, and the Wrights do join with the Slaters thereafter. In contrast, the Turners were a trade that created smaller practical and artistic wooden items such as furniture, bowls, candle sticks, etc.[67] Pageants sponsorship facilitated the development of two divergent woodworking occupations, only one of which continued to represent itself through the play.

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[66] A similar division occurred in York where the Turners joined the Painters, emphasizing the decorative rather than constructive aspect of their craft.

[67] This division of woodworking trades may also support Salter's sense that the Wrights' pageant was originally a longer one, and that its content was divided with the Cappers and Painters when the Wrights were suffering financially ("Banns" 457). However, since the Turners split off in the early

Conclusions

The histories of crafts participating in the pageants of Chester can reveal a great deal about what the pageants meant to the groups which performed them, when and why certain crafts took up pageants, and what impact these pageants had in turn on these crafts' identities. Craft histories can also illuminate cruxes in play development and contextualize documents that have previously raised more questions than answers.

In this chapter, I have used the material available for Chester to develop histories of craft involvement with cycle production as a means of exploring the cultural function of cycle drama for these crafts. I began by compiling lists of recognized craft associations at different moments in history, a technique which allowed me to cope with the volume of data, but which also served to outline the activities of the crafts over time. This approach highlights anomalies, drawing attention to those crafts whose relationship with the cycle shifted, as well as to those who resisted participation.

A diachronic sampling of crafts also builds a framework within which to construct more detailed histories, a methodology that I demonstrated in the five case studies of craft-pageant relationships. Through these detailed histories, I have shown the ways crafts employed pageant sponsorship in the negotiation of identity: as a means of claiming and maintaining status, asserting independence, and either dividing or uniting craft groups along lines of shared or disputed labour practices. These histories

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fifteenth century and the Cappers and Painters did not take up pageants until the early sixteenth century, the Wrights decline would have to have been a gradual one.

demonstrate that participation in the cycle assisted in the separation or amalgamation of crafts, while long term stability in a craft-pageant relationship represented crafts as independent organizations with a right to self-governance and civic protection. For crafts in Chester, pageant sponsorship played a significant role in establishing and maintaining craft identity.

Chapter Two

Stories of a City: The Chester Play as Civic Transformation

In Chapter One, I explored several motivations for craft involvement in cycle production. I did not, however, discuss the most common explanation of the relationship between crafts and their pageants, that of trade symbolism. In this chapter I will begin by exploring the logic of trade symbolism, and I will show how references to labour in the Chester play fulfilled a different purpose than has been previously suggested. While the presentation of craft materials and practices on stage could reflect positively on a pageant's sponsors, it also enriched the play as a representation of civic culture as a whole. Seeing the cycle as a speculum, I argue that the play served a transformative function, one which primarily reflected the interests of the civic elite. In the second half of the chapter, I explore two specific issues which challenged the elite's ability to administer the civic franchise—civic violence and jurisdictional conflicts—and which they attempted to transform through the medium of the play. As these examples show, details in the play which may initially seem to be anachronistic actually serve to construct extra-biblical, locally-situated narratives which would have been available to contemporary audiences. However, as this chapter demonstrates, current scholars require a more complex understanding of historical context in order to recover these subtexts.

A Dispersal of Civic Labour

As I suggested in Chapter One, the ability to produce a pageant served to advertise the craft in question as a distinct labour association. As scholars have noted, pageant sponsorship also provided the opportunity for more direct advertisement in the form of trade symbolism. This could take the form of what is now called product placement or could make use of more abstract relationships. An example of the former would be Herod's exit in the Vintners' pageant of *The Three Kings*. In his rage over the news of Christ's birth, he exclaims:

> This boye doth mee soe greatly anoye
> that I wax dull and pure drye.
> Have done and fill the wyne in hye;
> I dye but I have drink!
> Fill fast and lett the cuppes flye,
> And goe wee heathen hastelye. . . . (8.414-19)[68]

Wine is mentioned nowhere else in the pageant—indeed Herod has his hands full with the staff and sword called for repeatedly in the stage directions—and the reference is not an essential part of the action.[69] Rather, it delays Herod's departure, adding an unnecessary piece of stage business and an extra character (the boy who brings the wine), all of which suggests that the action was added to promote the sponsoring craft. A more symbolic association can be seen in the Painters' pageant, *The Shepherds*. The three shepherds and their servant all speak at length about their trade as husbandmen, revealing specific knowledge about the care and healing of sheep. This rustic knowledge suggests the converse of the elite company of Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers. However, after the shepherds have seen the Christ child, Joseph tells them to "[go] forth and preach this thinge" (7.149), and, at the end of the pageant, the four men take up religious vocations: one plans to preach and sing, another to "preach this thinge in every place" (7.659), a third to become an anchorite, and the fourth to be a mendicant hermit (perhaps meaning a friar). By becoming witnesses of Christ's nativity, these shepherds literally become heralds of Christ's birth. If the 1525 reinstatement of the position of Chester Herald was one motivation for the Painters' participation in the cycle, then this religious heraldry is a clever allusion to the sponsoring craft which flatters their trade while furthering the narrative of the cycle.[70]

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[68] I have cited all quotations from the text by pageant and line number in reference to the EETS edition of *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, edited by R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills. Quotations from the second volume, which consists of commentary and a glossary, are cited by the short title, *Chester*, and the volume and page number.

[69] Peter Meredith discusses Herod's stage directions in "Scribes, Texts and Performance" (25-6), in "'Making the Asse to Speak' or Staging the Chester Plays" (58), and in "Stage Directions and the Editing of Early English Drama" (81-4). In the earliest article, he suggests that Herod may have been juggling these items as part of the action on stage, and in all three he asserts the presence of an assistant who helps Herod manage his many props, probably the same character who presents Herod with his wine. Mills also mentions Herod's stage directions as part of a discussion distinguishing between textual and marginal stage directions in "Stage Directions in the MSS of the Chester Mystery Cycle" (46-7, 50).

The Chester Banns advertising the cycle confirm that such trade symbolism was an expected part of the production. The Banns generally call for impressive carriages, but the Early Banns specifically note that the Mercers' *The Offerings of the Three Kings* pageant will "be deckyd" with "sundry Cullors . . . / of veluit satten & damaske fyne / Taffyta Sersnett of poppyngee grene" (*REED: Chester* 36), the products of their trade. Within the action of the pageant, the magi's rich gifts also cast the Mercers' fine wares in a positive light. Similarly, the Late Banns admonish the Bakers to "caste godes loues abroade with accustomed cherefull harte" (*REED: Chester* 245) during their presentation of *The Last Supper*.[71] In some pageants, references to the sponsoring craft's labour are even more explicit. The pageant which depicted *The Annunciation and the Nativity* was, appropriately, produced by the Wrights, and Joseph explicitly identifies himself as a "simple carpenter" (6.112), displaying his ax, piercer, auger, and hammer to the audience as evidence of his trade.

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[70] This example also demonstrates the flexibility of trade symbolism. If the pageant (or one similar to it) was once presented by a religious association, a possibility I suggested in Chapter 1, the shepherds' religious vocations would still provide appropriate "trade" symbolism. Since there are many opportunities in any one pageant for a craft to showcase its trade, trade symbolism is frequently transferable. Only rarely, as in the case of *Herod* and the Vintners, is the connection made explicit in Chester's pageants.

[71] The Late Banns also command the Tailors to stage the ascension of Christ among "Clowdes moste ardente" (*REED: Chester* 246), which draws attention to a set peice that may have demonstrated the Tailors' skills.

Exploring these textual references to labour in the play, however, also reveals a surprising degree of disjunction between sponsors and symbolism. Several pageants make direct allusion to craft practices or supply potential moments of craft symbolism that are entirely unrelated to the sponsoring craft. The first such reference occurs in the pageant of *Noah's Flood*. Having been commanded to build the ark along divinely prescribed dimensions, Noah orders his family to "worche this shippe, chamber and hall" (3.51). Sem produces an ax, Cam a hatchet, and Jafett a pin and hammer, while the women, who are "weake to underfoe / any great travel" (3.67-8) do the unskilled labour: Noah's wife carries timber, Sem's wife brings a chopping block, Cam's wife fetches mud to seal the ship, and Jafett's wife gathers the wood chips to make a fire on which she will prepare their meal. As R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills point out, the tools are those of the Shipwrights, and "The men are the craftsmen, using the tools while the women do the labouring jobs" (*Chester* 2: 36). This division of labour between skilled and unskilled work may lie behind the comment on women's weakness. Women are not physically weak, since they can carry the heavy wood; theirs is a presumed weakness of ability which bars them from official craft membership.

The stage directions confirm that Noah (presumably with the help of his family) "beginneth to buyld the arke" (3.80 + SD) and he narrates as he works, constructing a mast, cables, a "seale-yard" (3.91), "topcastle" (3.93), and bowsprit. Again, specific ship-construction terminology situates this labour as within the jurisdiction of Shipwrights. It is somewhat disconcerting, then, that the sponsoring craft was that of the Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee, the men who carted water from the river Dee to houses in the town. While this craft was associated with water, encouraging an appropriate trade symbolism, the emphasis in the text on Shipwrights' skilled labour creates a disjuncture for the sponsoring craft. It also allows for a potentially negative association, since the labour most closely associated with the Waterleaders and Drawers is that done by the women, who also cart and carry and who are not permitted recognition as true craftsmen in the pageant.[72]

This disjunction between craft sponsorship and representation is not an anomaly. The Cappers' pageant of *Moses and the Law* features God instructing Moses in the carving of new tablets to replace the ones the patriarch has broken in anger. Again, a stage direction makes the action explicit: "Tunc Moyses faciet signum quasi effoderet tabulas de monte et, super ipsas scribens, dicat populo" (5.80 + SD). The direction to "make a sign as though he excavates the tablets from the rock" (my translation) draws attention to the specialized labour being enacted. I have already mentioned the detailed attention to husbandry in *The Shepherds* pageant, but there are also passing references to brewing practices in the Goldsmiths' *The Slaughter of the Innocents*, and the Bakers' *Last Supper* starts with Peter and John seeking a water carrier who will lead them to a chamber for the supper. The reference is biblical, but Chester is the only extant cycle that has the Bakers perform the Waterleaders' labour.

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[72] Christina M. Fitzgerald argues that the play as a whole participates in patriarchal, guild fantasies in her article "Manning the Ark in York and Chester." I discuss her work in the next section of this chapter.

Trade symbolism and the advertising potential of pageant production was certainly a reality, but these cross-craft references suggest that representations of civic labour within the Chester play served a different purpose. This purpose might at times overlap usefully with craft interests, but the primary intention was to develop a recognizable reflection of civic life, one which included the general presence of labour. Disassociating allusions to or representations of labour from the crafts which sponsor the pageants disperses all references to some degree, making even appropriate moments of trade symbolism into general representations. These craft references become one tactic in the play's representation of the city to itself.

Speculum Urbis: Cycle as Reflective Transformation

The idea of cycle plays as mirrors of contemporary life is not new. Forty years ago, V.A. Kolve argued that "Corpus Christi drama managed to hold a mirror to the times" (104) while simultaneously situating the audience's present within the scale of biblical history. In particular, Kolve suggests that anachronism in the plays made the "moral lessons from history . . . immediately and directly relevant to English medieval life" (109). Kolve resists the application of a single explanation for anachronistic detail, acknowledging a range of motivations from convenience and verbal transparency to figural and thematic development, but he ultimately characterizes contemporary allusions as secondary to and supportive of the plays' larger purpose: "man's real business is eternity, and the drama exists to remind him of that" (122-3). The characterization of contemporary detail as "anachronism" reinforces the sense that these allusions are extraneous, curiosities rather than key aspects of the text.

Most scholars since Kolve have followed his lead with respect to contemporary allusions in the Chester play. In *Dramatic Design in the Chester Cycle*, for example, Peter W. Travis sees anachronistic detail as a means to "transubstantiate the past into the present" (20). Like Kolve, Travis attributes various effects to the use of anachronism, including "timely, often satiric, commentaries upon present-day life," but he primarily sees anachronism as a tactic in "a new dramatic conception of time as history, as some sort of evolution from the past to the present and into the future" (24). He argues that the juxtaposition of "historical time with anachronistic time" allows "dramatic characters . . . to be contemporary both with their historical actions and with their audience" (24). This sense of time creates "a new awareness of the audience's role as participants in the illusion of the play" (24), which combines with direct address to serve the play's salvific goal, and it is this goal that Travis aims to demonstrate throughout his book. Travis's general dismissal of contemporary allusion is best exemplified by his decision to excise the Alewife segment from his consideration of the *Harrowing of Hell*. Despite the Alewife's specific references to local ale regulations, Travis characterizes the scene as "tacked on to leaven the seriousness and importance of the entire pageant" (68). Lumiansky and Mills specifically identify the scene's allusions as references to Mayor Henry Gee's early sixteenth-century reforms. They do so in their commentary to the play (2: 275), published four years after Travis's study, so it is understandable that Travis does not address this specific historical context, but the scene's tone of social corrective would seem to support his reading of the play as an exhortation to repentance and reform. For Travis, anachronism is only authoritative if it can be seen to forward the dramatic design of the cycle; it does not occur to Travis to explore the function of these allusions outside of that design.

David Mills provides a partial corrective to this tendency to undervalue contemporary allusion. In *Recycling the Cycle: The City of Chester and its Whitsun Plays*, Mills demonstrates how the Chester play participates in a local history of antiquarianism and connects both local and biblical history with the audience's present. In a section titled "The City as Actor" (173-8), Mills argues that direct address, trade symbolism, references to social issues, and other moments of contemporary allusion serve to blend "the specific historical context with the performing context" (173). He suggests that contemporary events and practices (such as outbreaks of plague, corporal punishment, and gaming prohibitions) both resonate with the content of the play and at times are referenced or discussed directly on stage. This recognition of contemporary details as content, not just technique, urges a consideration of their significance beyond the biblical narrative. Like Kolve, however, Mills ultimately presents the significance of these references as anachronisms which enrich the audience's experience of the biblical material. "Such allusions," he states, "bind the plays closely to their performing community," and they serve to draw the audience "into the plays as participants" (174). He adds, however, that "'literal' action exists as a figure of something greater" (178). The poor blind man in one of the ministry plays and the corrupt figures of the judge and merchant among the damned of doomsday both serve to emphasize the theological virtue of charity. The urban context of *Noah's Flood* casts the audience as the "thoughtless revellers" (176) who are drowned in the flood, but Mills stresses that audience members are also the inheritors of Noah's covenant. His reading, while recognizing the contextual resonance, emphasizes the audience's metaphorical fall and redemption rather than the contemporary social critique. The Welsh shepherds who witness the nativity are "amusing incomers" who serve "to define the civic community negatively as 'non-Welsh,'" but they ultimately "renounce their literal pastoralism for a spiritual pastoralism" (177). In each case, realistic details serve to reinforce the play's thematic lessons; they do not form a narrative in their own right.

By characterizing the use of contemporary details in cycle drama as a dramatic tactic of secondary importance, Kolve's discussion of anachronism has obscured the ways in which contemporary material can be central to the dramatic action. Christina M. Fitzgerald's recent article on masculinity in the York and Chester *Noah* pageants demonstrates the fruitfulness of confronting these contemporary references head on. Fitzgerald argues that the craftsmen who performed in the cycles "acted out the ideals and anxieties of their male-oriented, middle-class world" (352), and that "the plays also *produced men* by serving as a kind of dramatic conduct book" (355). She sees the urban environment of the Chester *Noah's* Flood as a corrupt and feminized space, and contends that the pageant offers "a symbolic escape from the city" (355) for the masculine labourers of the text. Noting that Noah is "cast as a prominent late medieval citizen" (356) and that the pageant "evoke[s] a metaphorical relationship between Noah's Ark and a guildsman's home and workshop" (357), Fitzgerald expands on the more obvious allusions to civic context, such as Noah's sons' claims that their tools are the best "in all thys towne" (3.55, 60) and Noah's Wife's later involvement with the gossips. She deconstructs the "ideological fantasy" (362) of craft hierarchy and unity depicted in the pageant, and questions the pageant's function as a "compensatory vision" (356) for the low status Waterleaders conscripted to represent the successful Noah.[73] Central to this ideological fantasy is the conflict between "a nostalgic vision of a coherent, cohesive guild" and "the destructive element of the city" (364). Fitzgerald demonstrates how the gossips with their drink and song characterize the city as a feminized, disordered space which "threatens the harmony of Noah's fantasy guild-family" (364). In making contemporary allusion central to her analysis, Fitzgerald reveals narratives of masculinity and craft culture which are founded on anxieties over gender and the corrupting influence of civic life.

Fitzgerald's discussion of the *Noah* pageant suggests that the civic image reflected to the audience was predominantly a negative one.[74] Unlike Noah and his family, the audience remains in the negative civic environment, still, quite literally, threatened by idle entertainment and the presence of alcohol on the festive occasion of the cycle's performance. The same audience, however, would have just witnessed the fall of the angels and of man in the first two pageants respectively, wherein both heaven and paradise are also defined as cities, troubling a reading of the city as a negative space. In the *Fall of Lucifer*, Heaven is obliquely identified with the city. When God leaves the stage, prior to Lucifer's fateful usurpation, he states that he goes to "see this blesse in every tower" (1.111), potentially alluding to the many towers along Chester's walls. The pageant of *Adam and Eve* is more explicit. When humanity's progenitors are expelled from paradise, one of the angels guarding the entrance states: "in this heritage I wilbe, / still for to ever see / that noe man come in this cyttye" (2.409-11).[75] The implication is that Adam and Eve are expelled from the "city" in punishment for their crime, and it maps the threat of banishment for law-breaking onto the city of Chester as paradise.

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[73] Fitzgerald specifically suggests that Noah is a merchant and a citizen while Waterleaders and Drawers would not have been able to purchase the freedom. While Noah's status as merchant is debatable (his family owns wood-working tools, which implies that he is a Carpenter or Shipwright), Fitzgerald is probably mistaken about the Waterleaders and Drawers' status as foreigners (that is, non-citizens). Craftsmen were required by law to take out the freedom (Morris 385-90). While there is evidence that some people avoided the obligation, there is at least one instance of a craft (the Wrights and Slaters in 1564) taking out the freedom en masse because it was deemed "unfitt for eny compeny to have any meetinge within this citie excepte they were free and members of the same" (Morris 385-90). The nature of the Waterleaders and Drawers' labour, one step removed from unskilled labour, would certainly have resulted in a lower status among the crafts, but they at least should have been free.

[74] Travis similarly notes that the Chester play sometimes "treats its viewers as if they were a host of unbelievers" (23), a tactic he explains as "compassionate abuse . . . to cajole and threaten its audience into a state of spiritual self-discovery" (25).

The remaining Old Testament pageants immediately following *Noah's Flood* similarly trouble a characterization of the civic context as unremittingly evil. In the pageant of *Abraham, Lot, and Melchysedeck*, Melchysedeck is identified repeatedly as being in "the cyttee" (4.31, 40, 109). He is called the king, but he also represents the priesthood, accepting Abraham's and Lot's tithes and celebrating Abraham's arrival with bread and wine, a symbolic pre-figuration of communion (4.30-112), interpretations which the Expositor confirms (4.113-144). The action identifies the civic setting as a place of positive religious activity. The pageant of *Balaack and Balaam* goes further. The prophet Balaam is called on to curse the Israelites, but instead he blesses "Godes people" who dwell in and by the "Cittye, Castle, and ryvere" (5.274), a setting which evokes Chester, its castle, and the river Dee. In the north, Balaam sees "fayre wonninge: / halles, chambers great likinge, / valles, woodes, grasse growing, / fayre yordes, and eke ryvere" (5.304-7). Lumiansky and Mills point out that the Israelites of the biblical account had settled in temporary camps, but Balaam describes a more permanent environment "perhaps appropriate to the urban surroundings of the performance" (*Chester* 2: 71). In the course of the first five pageants, then, Chester is figured as the holiest of cities and the most corrupt; it is paradise and its inhabitants are blessed as God's chosen people, but it is also the seat of humanity's corruption, the harbour of sin which invoked God's wrath and the earth's destruction. How are we to rationalize these contradictory images?

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[75] Another potential reference to a civic context occurs earlier in the pageant, when Satan's states his intention to get Adam and Eve "banyshed both of that valley" (203). The H manuscript provides "baylie" (baille) in place of "valley," a word reminiscent of both the city and castle fortifications. Lumiansky and Mills suggest that this reading "may be preferred as continuing the castle image from play 1 and suggesting a walled fortification—compare *cittye* 411" (23 n 203).

The answer lies precisely in Kolve's sense that cycle plays provide a "mirror to the times" (104): the Chester cycle acts as a speculum, or mirror, for the city. The speculum was a common medieval metaphor of instructive self-reflection which Ritamary Bradley describes as "showing the world what it is and what it should become" (101). Bradley traces the origins of the mirror as metaphor to early Christian conceptions of religious meditation which "have in common the injunction to judge changing appearances in the light of archetypal ideas, to seek after ideal beauty and unchanging truth—in a word, to seek after wisdom" (105).[76] Rayna Kalas echoes this educational impulse when she states that the "mirror title is a convention that presents the text as a didactic *exemplum*, leading its reader through the process of contemplation to a moral or spiritual truth" (523). In the case of the Chester cycle, while the play is never explicitly identified as a speculum, contemporary allusions and contexts in the text serve to reflect the city back to itself. The opening pageants establish the archetypal opposites of the holy and sinful city, while the play as a whole reveals aspects of the civic environment which are cause for both celebration and censure. The Chester play reflects an image of

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[76] Bradley is specifically discussing Augustinian and Augustinian-influenced understandings of the mirror-metaphor. She goes on to discuss other classical and early Christian authors as well, but she sees the Augustinian tradition as the dominant influence on the speculum genre which developed in the twelfth century (108).

Chester the city that is intended to lead the audience "through the process of contemplation to a moral or spiritual truth" (Kalas 523). It is a tool for civic transformation.

As the preceding consideration of labour in the play suggests, the play is not a tool which directly serves the sponsoring crafts, but rather one which serves the city as a whole, or, to be more specific, the ruling elite of the city. Lumiansky and Mills stress that "control of the Corpus Christi Play and the Whitson Play resided with the Mayor and the City Council" (*E&D* 184).[77] The play was a civic document under the purview of the mayor and aldermen, and, as Mills notes, the council had the authority to reassign and alter the pageants as they saw fit (*Recycling* 183).[78] When the play had fallen out of favour in the late sixteenth century, John Savage, the mayor who allowed its final performance in 1575, was called before the Privy Council to account for his actions and those of his predecessors. This inquiry implies that the mayor was liable not only for the practical aspects of performance but for the content as well. Lawrence M. Clopper in particular sees the shift of the play to Whitsun as evidence of the city's growing "sense of responsibility for the moral and religious welfare of the citizenry" ("Lay and Clerical" 107). Recognizing the play's status as a speculum clarifies one way in which this responsibility was met.

In addition to reflecting the perspective of the civic elite, the image of the city constructed by the extant manuscripts is necessarily a hypothetical one. There is no guarantee that every pageant was presented in a given performance, and the manuscripts themselves evidence a history of revision. Clopper, Lumiansky, and Mills all agree that the cycle as we know it was in place by 1532, but the extant texts bear traces of later alteration in response to the Reformation and changing dramatic fashions.[79] As well, Lumiansky and Mills suggest that the exemplar of the surviving manuscripts "contained alternative forms of the same play and that those responsible for the production of the cycle were required to decide which version was to be performed" (*E&D* 15). To use the oft-quoted phrase from Lumiansky and Mills, the extant texts present "a cycle of cycles" (*E&D* 86), a collection of hypothetical performances never fully realized in the form recorded on the page.

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[77] Mills restates this point in *Recycling the Cycle*: "In the sixteenth century at least, this document [the play] was in the charge of the mayor, as indeed was the whole production" (183).

[78] Martin Stevens takes issue with the idea of a centralized civic play text prior to the sixteenth century (263-5), but Mills rejects Stevens's argument and reasserts his own interpretation of the records in *Recycling the Cycle*, stating, "There is little evidence that individual guilds had independent responsibility for producing the text of their play in Chester" (182).

Despite these limitations, it is still possible to garner an accurate picture of Chester as it was presented to and received by its audiences. If the ruling elite's vision of the city did not to some degree cohere with the audience's experiences, then the speculum as corrective tool would have failed its purpose. With respect to the cycle's scope, the absence of an episode or pageant might shift the emphasis on a specific aspect of the civic image, but central issues are developed cumulatively over a number of pageants. The absence or alteration of one or two moments in the sequence does not reduce an aspect's overall significance.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will consider two aspects of the civic identity that were reflected and transformed by the cycle, namely the city's status as a garrison town and its long-standing conflict over jurisdictions with St. Werburgh's abbey.

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[79] For the full discussion of the cycle's development, see Clopper, "The History and Development of the Chester Cycle," and Lumiansky and Mills, "Development of the Cycle" in *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents* (165-202).

Exploring the resonance of contemporary allusions with historical context reveals multiple narratives that accompanied the biblical story of cycle drama, narratives which spoke to and relied on the experiences of their audience.

Living and Dying by the Sword: The Threat of Civic Violence

As both a garrison town and Palatinate capital, Chester's history was rooted in martial activity. War was one of the city's major industries, and the Palatinate, like other Marcher lands, existed in part to provide a buffer between Wales and England proper, with the added benefit that the county was free from national administration and taxation. At the same time, these characteristics fostered disorder. Martial expeditions brought large numbers of transient soldiers through the city, while the Palatinate's exemption from the English judicial system fostered lawlessness throughout the county. The resulting civic culture was the medieval equivalent of the mythic American Wild West, a culture at odds with the stability necessary to civic development. As a means of promoting such stability, the Chester play negotiates a delicate balance between celebrating and rejecting the city's martial character. Military references in the play contrast honourable battle with the disruption of civic violence, educating the audience in the proper contexts of violence and transforming the civic culture in the process.

A review of Chester's military history and connection to a martial economy contextualizes the play's treatment of military themes. Built on the remains of a Roman garrison, the medieval city was both a supply point and a mustering ground for Welsh and Irish excursions. One adversary was gradually replaced with another: "From the 11th century to the late 13th the city was the gathering place for armies setting out into north Wales, and from the late 12th century to the late 17th for expeditions to quell rebellions in Ireland" (*VCH: Chester* 7). In earlier periods, Chester's proximity to Wales and its military significance meant that the city frequently saw incursions and sieges. The Glendower Rebellion of the early 1400s, portrayed most famously in Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV*, regularly spilled over into Cheshire. Handbridge, Chester's southerly suburb, was repeatedly "destroyed by fire and sword" (Morris 42) prior to and during this rebellion. Twenty years later, by the time of the first record of the Chester play, the direct threat from Wales had mostly passed away. Yet even in times of relative peace, Welsh visitors and citizens with Welsh heritage were still considered potential sources of disruption and were subject to legal constraints. In 1403, the future Henry V ordered

> that all manner of Welsh persons and of Welsh sympathies should be expelled from the city; that none should enter the City before sunrise or tarry in it after sunset under pain of decapitation; or carry arms about him, except a knife for cutting his dinner; or meet together three in number, &c. (qtd. in Morris 45-6)

Regional unrest following the Wars of the Roses provoked a similar restriction. In response to Welsh support for a pretender to the throne, Prince Arthur's council ordered the mayor "to expell all Welshmen and Welshwomen out of the City of Chester" (qtd. in Morris 61-2) in 1491. Welsh civic presence continued to invoke the city's military history long after the border wars had ceased.

Relations with the Irish during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were, for the most part, less turbulent, with Chester importing Irish grain and linens during periods of peace, although racial tensions were evident: in 1549, "a fray arose betwixte the cittizens of Chester and 500 Irishmen called Kernes" (qtd. in Morris 69). More significant in terms of civic culture was the city's gradually increasing role as a departure point for

Irish expeditions. A recognizance dated 1540, for example, arranges shipping for "sodiours with theire horses and bagage into [the king's] dominion of Ireland" (qtd. in Morris 68). By the late sixteenth century,

> [t]he mayor of Chester had his hands fully occupied in the discharge of the onerous duties laid upon him as the chief authority at the port of embarkation, collecting vessels for transport, victualling the troops, and, not least of all, keeping good order in the city when, as happened not seldom, troops were detained by bad weather from proceeding to embark. (Morris 84)

The Chester play's last performance in 1575 preceded an increase in the number of Irish expeditions in the last quarter of the century, but Chester had, by this point, a long history of provisioning and transporting soldiers bound for Ireland.

Chester's role as a mustering ground presented the city with the predictable conundrum of a garrison town. Rupert Morris reports that the soldiers being transported to Ireland in the 1590s "brought considerable business into the city," but that this economic prosperity "was attended with much unpleasantness owing to the unruly behaviour of the men" (89). On the one hand, military activity provided economic stimulus; on the other, the influx of soldiers could prove disruptive. The economic benefits were manifold: merchants supplied provisions, craftsmen manufactured armour and weapons, and mariners provided shipping. As Mills notes, "The production of bows and arrows, presumably both for the soldiery stationed in Chester or passing through and for the citizens and visitors, was one of Chester's industries" (*Recycling* 71). He adds that archery "had an economic as well as a defensive purpose." Morris attests to the financial impact of the earlier conflict with Wales: "While trade in Chester was restricted with the rebellious Welsh, the city was in a degree compensated by the large stock of goods which were requisitioned for the maintenance of the king's troops and provisioning of his castles" (43). The building trades also benefited, constructing and maintaining fortifications both along the Welsh border and within the town itself. Richard the Engineer, a Chester citizen, was Edward I's master mason, and Chester supplied the workforce as well as the ingenuity: one hundred masons were recruited from Chester in 1295 to work on Caernarvon castle (*VCH: Chester* 37). War was a significant factor in Chester's economic prosperity, providing opportunities to those merchants and craftsmen who were willing to risk the dangers of living in the borderlands.

Not all revenue pleased the city fathers, however. While generally unrecorded, there was almost certainly profit to be had in providing accommodation and entertainment to the transient population of soldiers, the latter not necessarily within the bounds of the law. There are, for example, several references to brothel-keepers and nightwalkers in the civic records (Morris 49, 189, 221). A local legend records the rescue of an early thirteenth-century earl by a band of musicians, shoemakers, and, among others, prostitutes, attesting to the trade's long-standing presence in Chester (Mills, *Recycling* 82). The civic authorities were equally concerned with the practice of illicit games, such as dicing and bowling (Morris 330-1).[80] Moreover, bored soldiers could be expected to provide their own entertainment in the form of brawls. In 1594, the city was troubled by soldiers "who dailly fought and quarrelled that the cittyzens were often raysed," and the mayor threatened to "execute marshall lawe" upon the instigators (qtd.

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[80] It would be productive to examine court records for evidence of presentments against soldiers frequenting brothels or participating in illicit games.

in Morris 90).[81] War as an industry brought with it the threat of civic disruption through vice and violence.

If the city were faced only with transient soldiers, this potential disruption might have been contained by limiting visitors' movements and activities to specific locations, but the line between soldiers and citizens was not easily drawn: citizens were expected to arm themselves and train for battle as well, and there are suggestions that Chester also maintained a permanent garrison (Mills, *Recycling* 23; Morris 68; *VCH: Chester* 7). The city's stance on martial matters was further complicated in particular by pride in Cheshire archery. Morris states that "Archery attained a high standard of excellence in Cheshire during the Plantagenet period" (337), and Mills confirms: "Cheshire had an established reputation for archery. Cheshire archers had served a succession of monarchs in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and had even had their own distinctive livery" (*Recycling* 71). Cheshire archers played a notable role in the victory of Agincourt, while Chester as a city saw itself as "beinge of ould famous" for archery (*REED: Chester* 40) and expressed concern for maintaining this reputation. Like many other cities, Chester obeyed royal orders which promoted archery as a lawful game intended to improve the moral and martial status of English citizens, an alternative to "tenys, clash, dice, cardes, bowles, or such like unlawful games" (qtd. in Morris 330). For example, the city expected citizens to establish archery butts and practice at regular intervals (Mills *Recycling* 71; Morris 330, 339-40). In 1539-40, the city also required that all boys "above the age of six . . . exercise the craft of shooting" (Morris 339-40) on Sundays and holidays, and that their parents supply them with the necessary equipment.

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[81] Presumably this incident is representative of earlier periods. Again, it would be worthwhile to search the court records for evidence of soldiers' behaviour during the run of the play.

Chester's investment in archery went beyond national pride, however, and was enshrined annually in both the Sheriffs' Breakfast and the Shrovetide Homages. The Sheriffs' Breakfast centered around an archery contest, and "was said to have been instituted in the mayoralty of Thomas Smith, 1511-12" (Mills, *Recycling* 72), although it may have had earlier origins. On the Monday of Easter week, the city's two sheriffs formed teams from among the citizens, and the teams competed in shooting at butts. The winners led the procession to a communal breakfast, contributing 2d each to the feast while the losers contributed 4d. The Shrovetide Homages involved other competitions as well, but similarly emphasized archery. Initially characterized by a raucous football game, the homages were reformed in 1540 as a series of races and an archery contest. Mills in particular argues that the reinvention was motivated by "the official promotion of archery" (*Recycling* 73). As he notes, the order for this reformation begins by stressing Chester's historical renown for archery, signaling the centrality of this martial exercise in the new homages. Silver arrows formed one aspect of the homage proper, and it is likely that they were in turn distributed as awards for both the footraces and the archery contest. While the original order does not specify how the silver arrows were employed, Roger's 1609 *Breviary* suggests their use as awards for the archery contest. Clopper has expressed some doubt about the significance of archery in relation to the homages, but Mills argues convincingly that "the institution of the archery contest [was] a probable innovation from the start" (*Recycling* 76). These unique Cestrian traditions signal the degree to which archery was an integral aspect of Chester's civic and military identity. The underlying motivation of these civic ceremonials was the promotion of archery as a military skill and the training of citizens for war. Some of these citizens would have been the very soldiers mustering for expeditions in Wales, Ireland, and other frontiers, making the containment of a martial culture more difficult.

The city's ability to maintain civic order was further thwarted by the nature of the Palatinate itself. Scholars debate the origins of Chester's Palatinate status, and the degree to which Cheshire was legally distinct from England, but they generally agree that the English judicial system did not extend to the Palatinate during the medieval period, with the result that the county had a reputation for lawlessness.[82] Even in times of relative peace, Chester was plagued by "feuds and murderous quarrels between 'the gentlemen of Cheshire'" (Morris 49). Because "the king's writs did not run in the Palatine County of Chester, [lawbreakers], when hard pressed, retreated thither as to a safe sanctuary" (Morris 27-8), and the city of Chester provided literal sanctuary both during the annual fair and year-round at the Abbey of St. Werburgh's (Morris 157-9). Moreover, the city itself "was apparently notorious for its lawbreakers: in 1354 the prince asserted that there were more evil-doers within the city than in the entire shire outside it, and there were further complaints in 1357" (*VCH: Chester* 58). Morris comments that "The Chester Records indicate how common the use of the bow was in times of peace, ready to be snatched up and employed in the furtherance of a street quarrel" (337), and he provides numerous examples of violent quarrels between citizens during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (51-6, 69, 74). Citizens trained in military skills were as likely to employ these skills in private disputes. Such violence ran counter to the need for civic order, but, as a systemic aspect of Palatinate status, was difficult to remedy through civic jurisdiction. Several kings attempted to suppress the abuse of legal exemptions in Cheshire, but

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[82] See James W. Alexander's "The Alleged Palatinates of Norman England" for an overview of the debate (especially 22-4).

Palatinate privileges were not withdrawn until the 1530s (Morris 67), and it was not until 1541-2 that "important steps were taken towards freeing the city from undesirable inhabitants, by the suppression of the right of sanctuary, and the putting down of stews and brothels by the king's command" (Morris 69). A well-ordered town can potentially sustain a military presence with little disruption, but in a disorderly one, soldiers can easily be numbered among the "undesirable inhabitants." The distinction between outlaws seeking sanctuary and soldiers encouraged to enlist can at times depend on the convenience of war, while the connection between the military and prostitution has a long history. The presence of all three groups within Chester's judicially limited boundaries would have reinforced their disruptive potential and made the city's need to address the cultural impact of the martial economy more urgent.

A frequently transient population of soldiers and outlaws, a history rooted in both the culture and economics of war, and a tendency on the part of the citizenry to solve problems through violence—these were the problems that the city faced as it attempted to develop a stable environment conducive to trade and administration. On the one hand, this heritage was the source of Chester's existence and a continued means to its economic success; on the other, it threatened civic order and stability. Within this context, the play becomes a means to demonstrate the negative aspects of civic violence, contrasting honourable battle and martial exercise with dishonourable conflict. The audience is presented with an image of the destruction wreaked by violence in civic contexts as an object lesson to avoid such aggression even as the play continues to celebrate martial trade and activity.

The Old Testament pageants generally establish a positive depiction of military activity. Given the cultural and economic significance of archery in particular, it is not surprising that the play references this aspect of civic culture early on. The play reflects civic pride by elevating archery as the symbol of God's covenant with humanity. In the *Noah's Flood* pageant, the rainbow marking the covenant is likened to a physical bow. God states,

> The stringe is torned towards you
> and towards me is bent the bowe,
> that such wedder shall never showe;
> and this behett I thee. (3.321-3)

While this interpretation of God's sign is biblical (Gen 9.13), Chester draws attention to the martial connection, a reflection of the significance of archery to the civic identity.[83] The bow, and through it the practice of archery, becomes a sacred symbol sanctioning both craft industry and martial exercise.

The assignation of the play's central episode makes a similar point. While the Chester play was eventually moved to Whitsun week, it was originally devised as a Corpus Christi play. As such, the central episode was the *Passion*, the visual representation of Christ's sacrifice for humanity.[84] The two pageants representing this episode in the Chester play would presumably have been sought or bestowed as an honour, while the crafts responsible would necessarily have needed to exhibit financial stability. The city would not have risked non-performance of this key episode by assigning it to poor or unstable crafts. The earliest record of the play, that of the 1421-2 dispute, indicates that the two parts of the *Passion* were performed by the Bowyers, Fletchers, Stringers and Coopers on the one hand, and the Ironmongers on the other. While the earlier image of the bow celebrates the practice of archery, the Bowyers' performance of the first part of the *Passion* celebrates bow production more specifically. Assigning the *Passion* to this company proclaims the industry's centrality in the civic economy.[85] Bow-production as both a martial and economic activity leaves its mark on the play.

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[83] The York play also alludes to the bow metaphor when Noah states, "'Arcum ponam in nubibus,' / He sette his bowe clerly to kenne / As a tokenyng" (Beadle 89, l. 283-5). However, the lines in York put more emphasis on the bow as sign than as potential weapon.

[84] Mills states that "the Passion of Christ was a central feature of Chester's Corpus Christi Play" (*Recycling* 108). In "The Unity and Structure of *The Chester Mystery Cycle*" (71-2) and *Dramatic Design in the Chester Cycle* (217-22) respectively, Kevin J. Harty and Peter W. Travis both discuss the significance of the *Pentecost* as a central feature of the play when it was moved to Whitsun.

Beyond the specific celebration of archery, Chester's Old Testament pageants also emphasize warfare as a potentially virtuous and honourable activity. The main action in the fourth pageant opens with Abraham returning from a battle in which he has rescued his nephew Lot, and killed four pagan kings. Abraham's opening lines repeatedly praise God for this "victorye" (4.20, 37). His speech both communicates the details of this conflict to the audience and motivates the subsequent action: Abraham and Lot decide to give a portion of their spoils to King Melchysedeck, who is also "Goddes preyste" (4.33), in thanks for the victory. As the Expositor later explains, the action represents the instigation of tithing, but it also serves to laud martial activity. A messenger reports Abraham's slaughter of the four kings to Melchysedeck as news that will make his "hart to glade and to light" (4.50), while Melchysedeck himself exclaims that Abraham must be blessed because he can humble his enemies militarily (4.75-6). The emphasis on Abraham as a triumphant warrior casts martial activity in a positive light, while his subsequent tithing of the spoils of war characterizes warfare as an activity with beneficial moral consequences. Moreover, the context of the battle suggests appropriate motivations for martial activity: Abraham rescues his captured kinsman, rather than instigating battle for private gain, and his actions ultimately benefit the church through Melchysedeck as its representative.

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[85] A similar point may be made with respect to the Ironmongers. These specialized merchants traded in metal goods, which might have included weapons and armor. If so, their responsibility for the second half of the *Passion* would strengthen the impression that the play celebrates the city's martial economy. Mills suggests that Ironmongers made and sold nails (*Recycling* 174), but Ironmongers generally did not make the products they sold, and they certainly would have traded in more than nails. Archival research into Cestrian Ironmongers' products and practices would further an exploration of their involvement in the play.

The pageant of *Balaack and Balaam* also suggests a moral motivation for martial activity. At the end of the play, the Expositor explains how Balaack corrupted the Israelites by having pagan women seduce the young Jewish men. As a test of their love, the women required these men to worship a pagan god, an act which incurred God's wrath. The biblical account describes a plague that God unleashes as punishment (Num. 25.1-9), but the Doctor attributes God's retribution to

> . . . Phinees, a yonge man devowte,
> captayne he was of that whole rowte,
> and of these wretches, without dowbt,
> xxiiii thowsand the slewe. (5.428-31)

In part, the change from the biblical account may reflect a desire to limit references to plague as a form of retribution in a time when plague was a real concern, but the pageant also shifts the emphasis from an individual religious act to a large-scale martial one. Numbers 25.7-8 describes Phinehas as the "son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest" (*New Oxford*) and states that he slays two people: an Israelite man and a Midianite woman. In recognition of Phinehas's act, God ends the plague and grants the young Israelite's lineage "a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites" (Num. 25.12). While Phinehas's motivation in the pageant is still religious, the pageant's account downplays his connection to the priesthood, recasting Phinehas as a devout captain who leads the faithful into battle against the heretics. As with Abraham earlier, the emphasis is on the triumph of battle, represented by the significant number of people slain.

In contrast to these positive examples, martial activity in New Testament pageants is almost always disruptive. The first example of this disruption is fairly pedestrian and presented as jocular entertainment but, as with all instances of the carnivalesque, it represents potential tensions in the normal hierarchy and embodies the threat of disorder.[86] In the *Shepherds* pageant, Trowle the journeyman herder bests his masters in a wrestling match (7.136-7) before taking his wages out of their food.[87] This disruption of hierarchy is somewhat subdued because the shepherds as a group are characterized as clowns by their rustic knowledge of husbandry, Welsh origin, obsession with food, and mis-interpretation of the angel's song. Moreover, Trowle's challenge is not the only example of hierarchical disruption: Tudd, the third shepherd, complains of being henpecked (7.85-90) and asserts that he has been engaged in women's work—scouring an old pan—to avoid his wife's wrath (7.74-6). These factors help to reduce the threat of Trowle's challenge, but they do not entirely dissipate the visceral quality of the spectacle which follows. In contrast to the Old Testament pageants which only report on triumphant and socially acceptable battle, the *Shepherds* pageant makes the physical act of wrestling and its associated challenge to the social hierarchy a part of the action. This violence, while contained in the carnivalesque frame, is real violence; the physicality of wrestling blurs the lines between representation and reality. If performed convincingly, there is little phenomenological difference between performed wrestling and real wrestling. By incorporating an act which can appear real, the pageant makes Trowle's threat to order more real as well.

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[86] For introductions to Bahktin and the carnivalesque in medieval drama scholarship, see Anthony Gash, "Carnival against Lent: The Ambivalence of Medieval Drama," Kristina Simeonova, "The Aesthetic Function of the Carnivalesque in Medieval English Drama." In "Laughter in Medieval English Drama," however, Hans-Jürgen Diller warns against the influence of modern sensibilities when contemplating the effect of the carnivalesque on medieval audiences, and Chris Humphrey similarly challenges fixed interpretations of the cultural function of misrule in his article, "The World Upside-Down in Theory and as Practice."

[87] Travis also comments that the wrestling "succeed[s] only in upsetting regular social order" (121), but he sees this disruption as part of a Nativity group that invokes "youthful pleasure" and "celebrate[s] the triumph of innocence, energy, natural feeling, and social inferiority over their worldly, cranky, and devious opposites" (110-1).

Trowle's complaint is that he has not been paid. The shepherds try to pacify their journeyman with the offer of food, even stating that it is "meate for a knight" (7.239), but Trowle continues to challenge and insult the shepherds until they are so angry that they must fight him. The younger Trowle easily defeats his opponents, and the verbal exchanges reinforce his challenge to the social hierarchy. For example, before the wrestling begins, Trowle announces himself as though in a wrestling ring:

> Nowe comes Trowle the Trewe;
> a torne to take have I tight
> with my masters. Or I rewe
> put him forth that moste is of might. (7.234-7)

This formal challenge engages his combatants specifically as masters; Trowle confronts the hierarchy as much as he confronts these individuals. When the second shepherd faces Trowle, he attempts to reassert his authority, addressing Trowle as "boye" and threatening to break Trowle's bones unless he kneels and begs forgiveness (7.258-61). Trowle's superior physical strength makes a mockery of this attempt to enact social authority, and Trowle further demonstrates his triumph by ordering his opponents to bend their backs to him (7.270). The lines employ irony for humour, since the shepherds are bent over in pain, not deference, but they also reinforce the social order's vulnerability to violent attack. Trowle easily circumvents the social hierarchy because he is stronger than its representatives. Having been defeated, the three shepherds lament their situation but can find no solution beyond patience. The audience is saved from having to contemplate the significance of this lack of recourse by the appearance of the Nativity star and the angel's song, and all four characters are recuperated into the social order by means of a spiritual pastoralism at the end of the pageant, but the wrestling represents a potential moment of rupture, a moment when the performance of violence becomes real and threatening.

The disruptive violence of the *Shepherds* pageant signals a shift in the play as a whole with respect to military activity. While the Old Testament pageants present honourable warriors who defeat clearly identifiable enemies, the soldiers and knights of the New Testament pageants threaten the civilians that they should protect. The knights in the Slaughter of Innocents pageant, for example, demonstrate the negative potential of unleashing military personnel in a civic context. Herod employs at least two knights.[88] These knights are characterized by their pride and a highly developed sense of the tasks appropriate to their rank. When commanded to kill all male children in the land, they mistake the order, thinking they are only to find and kill the specific infant that has enraged Herod, and they complain that the task is beneath them. "A villanye it were," the first knight states, "to sley a shitten-arsed shrowe" (10.155, 157), particularly since a boy would be strong enough to chop the baby's head off. Certainly it is not a job for "knightes of great degree" (10.155, 157, 160). The second knight concurs and begs for more suitable work, such as fighting another knight or champion (10.161-8). This concern over the scope and quality of their assignment contrasts with the defensive and religious motivations of the earlier pageants. Herod reassures the knight that "it is neyther on nor two / that you shall sley, as mott I goo, / but a thousand and yet moo" (10.169-171), and this increase in scale appears to satisfy the knights. Even before the slaughter begins, the knights represent violence without conscience.

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[88] The knights are initially addressed as "syr Grymball and syr Lancherdeepe" (10.58). Later the first knight names himself as "syr Waradrake the knight" (10.202), while the second is "syr Grymbald Lancherdeepe" (10.226). The name changes may represent alternate versions or incomplete revisions, or could indicate the presence of extra knights.

Having received their orders, the knights shift modes, boasting about their capacity for violence and their murderous intentions. They are still technically speaking to Herod, but the semi-formal tone of the boasting and the re-introduction of the knights by name suggests direct address to the audience, transferring their threats directly to the crowd. Moreover, it is in these boasts that anachronistic detail invokes the double image of local and biblical settings. The second knight begins by claiming that he will fulfill his task "though the kinge of Scottes and all his hoste / were here" (10.218-19). He boasts at one point that he has slain ten thousand knights and at another that he has slain "more then a hundreth thousand. / Both on water and on land" (10.230-1). Lumiansky and Mills believe that the Scottish reference invokes Cestrian involvement in the 1513 battle of Flodden Field "when some 10, 000 Scots . . . were killed." They add, "The battle had particular local connections, in that the action of a company of archers under Sir Edward

Stanley, Earl of Derby (Lancashire), was decisive in the victory" (*Chester* 2: 151). Whether or not the knight's reference is to a specific battle, the allusion to the Scots disrupts theatrical distance and invites the audience to interpret the action of the play simultaneously as historical and contemporary. This reference further puts the audience in a difficult position with respect to the knight. By defining his prowess in relation to a common English enemy, the knight associates himself with soldiers who defend the nation, but the character also announces his intention to kill the children of the local inhabitants. He represents indiscriminant violence, harming those he is supposed to protect. If the text does allude to Flodden field, the sense of ambiguity increases. Morris states that "the day [had] no glorious memories for Cheshire" (66). While Stanley's troop did contribute to the English triumph, a further thousand Cheshire men under the Earl of Surrey were defeated and several notable locals were slain. The fictional figure of a local knight who took pride in his accomplishments against the Scots would also serve as a reminder of the many men who did not return from the battle, casting the knight's boasting in a macabre light.

The pageant as a whole comments on the tensions inherent in housing professional soldiers in a civic environment. Lumiansky and Mills make note of Chester's garrison status, commenting that the civic context gives "an added dimension" (*Chester* 2: 153) to the exchange of insults between the knights and the mothers before the killing begins, but I argue that the civic context makes this conflict a central issue in the pageant. As with the *Shepherds* pageant, this exchange represents a disruption of the social hierarchy, but one without the redeeming qualities of carnival humour. The battle between the knights and the mothers begins verbally, when the knights call the women "queanes" or whores. The first mother responds,

> Whom callest thou "queane," scadbe dogge?
> Thy dame, thy daystard, was never syche.
> Shee burned a kylne, eych stike;
> yet did I never non. (297-300)

Lumiansky and Mills suggest that the woman "plays upon the two words, *quen*—'queen' and 'prostitute', for as knight to the king the soldier's *dame* is the queen" (*Chester* 2: 153). This reading, however, causes them difficulty with the lines that follow: "The expression [burned a kiln] is clearly one of abuse. Probably a malt-kiln, where malt was dried in brewing, is intended, the suggestion being that the soldier's mistress (the queen?) is a common ale-wife" (*Chester* 2: 153). There has been no mention of Herod's wife in the pageant to this point, and she does not otherwise appear, making this explanation somewhat strained. It is more likely that the woman says exactly what she means, that the knight's mother, not the queen, is a common ale-wife. While "dame" can mean "a woman of rank" (defs. 1-3), it also means "mother" (def. 4). The force of the retort is that the knight's mother was of a lower class than the woman he threatens, since she relied on brewing for income. Even so, the knight's mother did not resort to prostitution, so there is no reason to suspect that the woman he addresses would either. The woman's statement attempts to deflate the knight's assumed authority by adopting the familiar maternal stance which warns the referent, "Don't talk back to me, young man. I knew your mother." At the same time, the circumstance which requires this stance invokes a number of anxieties. On one level, the anxiety is over the disruption of class and social hierarchy. If the son of an ale-wife can become a knight and subsequently enact violence on the community, then the social hierarchy no longer provides stability or protection. Herod learns this to his own detriment at the end of the pageant when he discovers that his own child has been slaughtered along with the rest. On another level, the anxiety is created by the severing of social ties. The young man who leaves his community or his role in the community to become a soldier, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, is no longer reigned in by social contracts and expectations, while the tacit permission and means for violence inherent in martial employment can easily spill over into non-martial contexts.

In the context of these anxieties, the women's insults attempt to re-contain the knights within a social hierarchy and contract. The threats are initially those a mother would give to a recalcitrant child. For example, one mother threatens to knock the knight on the head with her distaff (10.303), while the mothers' insults generally assert the knights' lower social and moral status. The insults include "Ribott" (10.309), a scoundrel; "stytton stallon" (10.314), a "man of lascivious life" (*Chester* 2: 154); and "styck-tode" (10.314, 369), a toad-stabber. Once the killing starts, the knights are repeatedly identified as thieves (10.329, 341, 346, 379, 382, 387). As Claire Sponslor notes in discussing the equivalent pageant in York, the emphasis on theft focuses on the potential labour value that the knights effectively steal from these women. In part, this is a tactic to recast the crime in terms of one that must be compensated, a compensation which one woman implicitly refuses, even as she defines the knights' actions in criminal terms:

> Thow shall be hanged on a tree

> and all thy fellowes with thee.
> All the men in this contree
> shall not make thy peace. (10.349-52)

The same woman, after attacking the knights tells them to "buskes you to moote" (10.360), literally warning to prepare for legal debate. Again the implication is that the knights will face legal proceedings for their actions. By naming the knights as thieves and criminals, the women continue to contain and undermine the knights' assumed class superiority.

The women's physical retaliation against the knights represents the final breakdown of order that is always potential in the uneasy peace of a garrison town. The women acknowledge that they have no real physical power—they comment on the knights' broad helmets and their weapons and one specifically notes her lack of strength to stop them (10.407)—so their attack is one of desperation. Their only real weapons are verbal, both in the insults and in the threat of legal actions. Their very need to defend themselves in a public forum disrupts gender hierarchies, signaling the breakdown of social order. Some scholars explain this battle of distaffs as comic relief. Lumiansky and Mills, for example, claim that "the sense of sorrow is subsumed under the vindictiveness and comic belligerence of the women" (*Chester* 2: 154). In the context of a garrison town, however, realistic tensions erupting into violence on stage both enact local anxiety and demonstrate the consequences of failing to maintain social order.

Not only do the women suffer in the loss of their children, but the knights, too, find themselves in a losing position as well. They undertake their task with the sanction of the state but, in doing so, also kill Herod's son. Their uncontrolled violence has unexpected consequences which threaten their own safety. While the pageant does not reveal what happens to the knights, they are placed in a position where they may face legal action for theft from the citizens, punishment for treasonous murder from the state, or both. The pageant presents a worst case scenario of the city as garrison town, a warning to maintain peace and order or face distressing consequences.

Cleansing the Temple: Civic Conflicts over Jurisdiction

A recurrent theme in histories of Chester is the city's conflict with the Abbey of St. Werburgh whose large jurisdiction was located within the city walls. Morris wryly attributes the dispute to the tedium of peace, asserting that

> Chester appears to have prospered during the peaceful times which followed upon the annexation of Wales, and the civic authorities found leisure to commence that long-continued struggle with the Abbot of Chester for freedom from toll and from the regulations of the annual fair, which was finally, after a contest of several generations, decided in favour of the mayor and citizens. (21-2)

The primary issue was over the rights to the Midsummer Fair, a lucrative event which drew many visitors to Chester.[89] There were significant profits to be made both from renting booths to merchants and from collecting gate tolls on visitors. The earls who first established the fair determined that the abbot would "receive toll and all the profits of the fair" (Morris 117), and they "prohibited trading elsewhere in the city while the fair lasted" (*VCH: Chester* 29). Mills notes that citizens regained the right to trade normally during the Fair in 1258, but that the loss of gate tolls continued to disadvantage the city because "The medieval gates were the custom points, economically and symbolically marking the city's trading autonomy" (*Recycling* 35). The abbey's "trading.monopoly" (*VCH: Chester* 81) further disadvantaged local merchants during the busiest economic event of the year because non-citizens were free to trade without penalty in the fair. Trading in weekly markets was restricted to citizens, while foreigners (which could include non-free residents) paid the tolls and fines which funded the civic administration. During the fair, however, anyone could trade, provided they did so within the fair grounds and, thus, the abbey's jurisdiction. The fair increased competition, making it more difficult for local merchants to benefit from the influx of potential buyers, even as the fair reduced the city's potential income as a whole. It is not surprising, then, that the city wished to challenge the abbey's monopoly, but it took a long time for the city to wrest control of the fair from the abbey. The struggle which began in the early thirteen hundreds was not resolved in the city's favour until 1506 (Mills, *Recycling* 27), and not fully abandoned until the dissolution thirty years later removed the abbey's claim to authority entirely.

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[89] The *VCH: Chester* notes that gate tolls peaked in the week around 24 June, during the Midsummer Fair (66).

Fair rights were only one aspect of the struggle, however. Other conflicts arose over physical boundaries, judicial authority, and financial exemptions. The Victoria County History volume for Chester notes:

> In the 1280s and 1290s the citizens unsuccessfully contested the abbot's right to hold a manor court at St. Thomas's chapel outside the Northgate, and tried to prevent him from treating a road from St. John's hospital to the anchorage at Portpool as his private property. There were also complaints that he had blocked the road to the stone cross outside the Northgate and encroached on the highway

> by building a bakehouse. In the early 14th century there was further friction over the exemption of the abbey and its tenants from tolls . . . . (81)

The abbey also owned its own corn mill (*VCH: Chester* 31), creating a further point of competition and disadvantage for the city. Moreover, the inhabitants of the city's religious jurisdictions were often responsible for disrupting the peace; Morris reports frequent indictments against the abbey's monks for violent affrays and theft. Nor were the abbots above reproach. For example, Abbot Thomas de Newport (1363-1385), among other questionable activities, "compelled persons who were not his tenants to appear at his court, and punished them there for certain offences and debts" (Morris 127). The Abbey both decentered the city's authority, challenging its judicial control and economic autonomy, and served to disrupt what authority remained. For these many reasons, Chester engaged in a long struggle to wrest rights away from the Abbey, and the play was one tool to raise popular support for the civic perspective.

The play includes several instances of religious education for the audience's benefit such as recitations of the commandments and the creed.[90] These didactic and catechetical moments are an inherent aspect of cycle drama and of Chester's play in particular: the play provides a multitude of expository characters that explain the action and guide the audience's interpretation. However, the Chester play also uses biblical criticism of the Jewish temple to critique the over-extension of contemporary religious authority. Moments of anti-clerical condemnation resonate with the city's concerns and obliquely rebuke St. Werburgh's practices. These moments of biblical history become political statements which serve the city's interests.

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[90] REED's forthcoming publication of the new Cheshire volume includes transcriptions from the Letterbook of Christopher Goodman. Goodman objects precisely to these moments of religious education when he details the "absurdities" of the play in a letter to the Archbishop of York (1: 147-8). For example, Goodman objects to "The Creed made in 12 Articles by 12 Apostles every one their portion" (148). My thanks to Alexandra Johnston and Sally-Beth MacLean of the REED office for allowing me to review this material prior to its publication.

The two most overt critiques occur near the centre of the play, during the ministry sequence. Pageant thirteen, which includes the episode of the *Blind Chelidonian*, alludes specifically to the religious abuse of judicial authority, while pageant fourteen, which includes *Christ and the Money-Lenders*, addresses religious involvement in economic matters. In the first of these episodes, Christ heals a blind man who then attests to the miracle in a judicial context. This story is paired with *The Raising of Lazarus*, and the pageant as a whole develops a theme of witnessing God's divinity (Travis 156), but it also establishes an anti-clerical critique that resonates with the city's jurisdictional conflicts.

The story presented in the pageant follows the details of John, Chapter 9 fairly closely. In the biblical story, Jesus heals a blind man, and his neighbours, expressing incredulity, bring the man before the Pharisees. The Pharisees do not believe his account of the miracle and accuse him of feigning his earlier blindness. The man's parents are summoned and confirm his previous disability, but they avoid taking responsibility for their son's statements. The man restates his version of events, witnessing for Christ, and is subsequently cast out of the synagogue. As Lumiansky and Mills note, the pageant's representation of the blind man's trial before the Pharisees serves as anti-clerical satire:

> The proceedings of the Pharisees suggest the activities of the ecclesiastical courts. Nuntius appears in the role of Summoner. The parents fear excommunication and heavy fines, [line] 168, the latter unbiblical. Such courts were the object of satiric

> attack in medieval literature, particularly stressing the plight of the poor and helpless, as the blind man's parents are presented as being. (*Chester* 2: 188)

The blind man's mother complains that the Pharisees "never did poore men good!" (13.164) and his father says they must obey or the Pharisees will "course us and take our good" (13.168). Indeed, the Pharisees do "curse [the blind man] owt of this place" (13.228) because he refuses to keep silent about Christ's miracle. The episode indicts religious legal action in general, suggesting that the religious authorities over-reach their jurisdictions, invent false accusations, and extort citizens with threats of excommunication. St. Werburgh's provides a convenient local referent for this anti-clerical indictment within Chester.[91]

Other small changes from the biblical account situate the pageant's action in familiar civic contexts, and further condemn religious authorities for usurping civic jurisdiction. Most significantly, the blind man's status is defined in relation to his ability to work. In the biblical account, when the parents say that they do not know how their son regained his sight, they tell the Pharisees that "he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself" (*New Oxford*, John 9.21). In the pageant, however, the mother states:

> For he hath age his tale to tell,
> and his mother-tonge to utter hit well;
> although hee could never bye nor sell,
> lett him speake, we desire. (13.185-8)

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[91] While the abbot of St. Werburgh's would not have had the authority to excommunicate the people brought before his court, he would have been in a position to recommend excommunication and to use the possibility of excommunication as a threat. My thanks to Dr. Stephen Reimer for pointing out the limit of the abbot's power.

While the biblical story transfers responsibility to the son because he is an adult and therefore accountable for his own actions, the mother's lines in the pageant seek to defend her son's right to speak for himself despite his inability to participate in the civic economy. The claim that the man "could never bye nor sell" (13.187) is posited as one reason why the Pharisees have rejected his statements. Lumiansky and Mills dismiss "buy and sell" as "apparently a fill-in phrase" (*Chester* 2: 189), but it can serve as a contemporary civic reference. Only citizens, those who had taken out the freedom in Chester, generally had the right to buy and sell without toll. One way to gain the freedom would be to serve an apprenticeship, but the man's blindness would have prohibited him from learning a trade. The implication is that the blind-man's word has less authority because he has no trade and subsequently has not become a citizen. At the same time, by defining the man in relation to craft identity, the pageant situates him within the civic jurisdiction: he is a non-free resident, and, as such, should only be answerable to civic authority.

The man's capacity for labour is also the motivation for his indictment in a judicial context. As a disabled resident, he has a right to local charity, but if he has been faking his disability to gain that charity, he has contravened national and civic law. Poverty and vagabondage were significant concerns in Chester. Morris states that "the necessity of providing for the poor and needy, and of distinguishing the worthy recipient of Christian charity from the worthless and idle vagabond, was found, as early as Edward III.'s reign, to be attended with much difficulty" (354).[92] The Victoria County History also attests to a local concern over classifying the poor: "In 1539-40 Chester was one of the first places to regulate them in response to national legislation distinguishing between the deserving and undeserving poor" (107). This legislation, established by the reformist mayor Henry Gee, licensed the deserving poor to beg in assigned wards, set punishments for unlicensed "valiant" beggars, and required unemployed but capable men to present themselves at a hiring market. Long before such local legislation was enacted, the mid fourteenth-century Statute of Labourers had forbidden "the giving of alms to any beggars able to labour" (Morris 354).

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[92] *Piers Ploughman* addresses the vagabondage that arose as a consequence of the Black Plague during Edward III's reign. In addition to the displacement that resulted from pestilence, Chester's later problems with vagabondage were aggravated by its status as both a port and a garrison town.

The neighbours who deliver the blind man to the Pharisees in the pageant allude to contemporary issues of vagrancy when they assume that they have been defrauded of their alms. The neighbours first debate whether the man is the one who "yesterdaye / asked our almes as we came this waye" (13.82-3). The man assures them of his identity:

> Good men, truely I am hee
> that was blynd, and nowe I see.
> I am no other verelye;
> enquire of all my kynne. (13.89-92)

Given this assurance, the neighbours' response suggests a prejudicial assumption of wrongdoing. The second neighbour demands that the man "tell the trueth" and "Declare . . . withowt more reasoninge" (13.93, 99-100), revealing a seemingly unmotivated skepticism. The blind man has only identified himself and suggested that the neighbours may ask his family for confirmation of his identity; he has not attempted to explain his regained sight or justify his earlier blindness, but the neighbours' lines reveal suspicion and enact a legal scenario in which the man must defend his apparent health. The implication is that two neighbours believe that the blind man was previously faking his disability to avoid working. The Pharisees make this suspicion explicit: "Surely thou arte a knave of kynde," says one, "that faynest thyself for to be blynde" (13.141-2). An ecclesiastical court, however, should have no authority over the man's status as deserving poor. The issue should be under the purview of the civic administration.

While the *Blind Chelidonian* condemns religious judicial activities, *Christ and the Money-Lenders* critiques religious involvement in financial transactions, invoking the central conflict over the Midsummer Fair. The biblical account of the cleansing is quite short. Mark 11.15-17 provides the most detailed version:

> Then they came to Jerusalem. And he [Jesus] entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." (*New Oxford*)

Matthew 21.12-13 and Luke 19.45-46 both condense the description of Christ's actions slightly, but all three agree on the scripture he recites for the occasion. The Chester play is the only English cycle which presents this episode, and for good reason. Besides potentially subversive content which encourages the disruption of trade, staging the scene presents practical difficulties. Small props scattered around a movable stage must be gathered up and re-set before the actors can move on to the next station. As with the episode of the blind-man, Chester's inclusion of this scene despite its potential problems suggests that it served the city's interests. Biblically, the episode condemns the Jewish

Temple's profiteering; its inclusion in the Chester cycle critiques religious institutions which seek to benefit financially from mercantile transactions. As with references to the unjust practices of ecclesiastical courts, this critique operates on the level of general anti-clerical satire, but it also has a local referent in the Abbey's control over the Midsummer Fair.

Several details in the pageant's dramatization of the biblical passage suggest that the central referent of this critique was the Midsummer Fair. A significant alteration occurs in Christ's reference to scripture. Given the Chester play's overall concern with scriptural evidence, one might expect the direct inclusion of a passage repeated in all three gospels, but Christ's complaint is that the merchants make his "Fathers wonnynge / a place of marchandize" (14.227-8). Changing a "den of robbers" to "a place of merchandise" shifts the emphasis from illegal or immoral activity to a problem of circumstances. Merchandising is not in itself the issue; its association with the church is. The Midsummer Fair took place in front of the Abbey gates (Morris 123), physically signifying the relationship between the fair and the Abbey; Christ's rebuke draws attention to this physical relationship, arguing for a necessary separation of church and commerce. At the same time, audience members familiar with scripture could potentially interpret the dialogue in conjunction with the original biblical passage. While merchandising is not theft, merchandising under the purview of the Abbey does rob the city of its revenue.

The pageant also allows for the possibility that the people Christ rebukes are more than biblical money-changers. The speech headings identify both characters as "mercator" or merchant. While one merchant laments, "My table with my money / is spread abroade" (14.234-5), both also refer to Jesus casting down and ruining their "warre" or merchandise (14.230, 251). These references suggest that their tables are stocked with items for sale, bringing to mind the diversity of products available at a fair or market, rather than the limited transactions of money-changers. The biblical account does allow for dove-sellers, but such wares would be difficult to overturn and then re-set on a stage. The Midsummer Fair, however, traded in a wide array of goods, including "salt, coal, . . . sacks of wool, pelts, . . . copper or bronze pots and bowls," and cloth (*VCH: Chester* 45-6). Items such as these would fulfill the description of "warre" and make the overturning of tables an effective theatrical moment while still being comparatively easy to re-set. The dialogue and set requirements suggest that Jesus disrupts a more recognizable marketplace, such as that of the Midsummer Fair.

Finally, the pageant extends the biblical episode, conflating it with a later direct challenge to Christ's authority. At a later point in the biblical story, when Jesus is teaching in the temple, several of the gospels describe the Pharisees demanding that Jesus justify his authority. In the pageant, the merchants speculate that Jesus would not dare disrupt their trade unless he "would attayne royaltee" (14.238). The first merchant adds,

> Hit seemes well hee would be kinge
> that casteth downe thus our thinges
> . . . .
> Saye, Jesus, with thy janglinge,
> what evidence or tokeninge
> shewest thow of rayninge,
> that thou darest doe this? (14.241-2, 245-8)

The assumption that Christ's authority must be that of royalty matches neither the cleansing of the temple nor the questioning of authority in the biblical accounts, but it does apply directly to the debate over the Midsummer Fair. Because the Fair was instituted and maintained by the Earl of Chester, who was also the King or Prince of the realm, only the Earl had the right to disband or forbid it. The reference to royal authority in the challenge situates the episode in the context of local jurisdictional battles.

Spatial implications of the pageant as a whole may further support the sense of an imangined royal attack on the Abbey's involvement in the Midsummer Fair. The cleansing episode in the pageant is immediately preceded by the entry to Jerusalem. During this section of the pageant, citizens line the "streets" to welcome Christ in a manner reminiscent of a Royal entry, much like the action of the equivalent pageant in York.[93] There was no standard route for royal entries in Chester, but most would culminate in front of the Abbey. The action on and around the static pageant wagon mentally superimposes a procession which moves through the citizens in the civic jurisdiction and ends in front of the Abbey. Christ's discovery of the merchants in this location and his application of royal authority combine to suggest a rejection of the Abbey's jurisdiction over the Midsummer Fair.

The emphasis on mercantile trade and the assertion of royal authority over that trade both allude to the conflict between the city and the abbey over the rights to the fair. By including this episode in the pageant, the city critiques a religious involvement in the fair, condemning the Abbey's role as irreligious. Since the first performance of each pageant took place in front of the Abbey gates and in the same location as the fair, it would be easy to make the allusion overt when tensions between the two jurisdictions ran high. For the same reason, the episode's topical allusion would have lost its meaning after the dissolution and the subsequent removal of the Abbey's jurisdiction altogether. Even before the dissolution, however, the city did gain the rights to the fair by means of a royal charter in 1506, and they successfully defended these rights against the Abbey's appeals in the following years (Morris 133-4).

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[93] Martin Stevens discusses the relationship between royal entries and the York *Entry into Jerusalem* in *Four Middle English Cycles* (50-62). See also Ruth Nisse's article, "Stages Interpretations: Civic Rhetoric and Lollard Politics in the York Plays," which explores the representation of the pageants civic characters as burgesses (436-42), and Sarah Beckwith's discussion in *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays*, which connects the pageant's use of a royal entry trope back to the liturgy (100-3).

Conclusions

Anachronisms in the play serve a larger purpose than simply reinforcing a biblical narrative. They are the residue of the myriad other narratives developed through and around the play, narratives which helped both to define and transform the civic identity. For scholars, these traces provide starting points for historical and textual analysis that, combined, serve to enrich our experience of the Chester play and to suggest what the play meant to the audiences who first saw it. Civic violence and competing jurisdictions were not the only issues facing the city fathers, nor the only issues that they used the play to confront and transform. Mills's discussion of the significance of charity resonates with a growing civic concern over vagrancy and the deserving poor, a context which makes representations of poverty in the play more directly applicable to Cestrian experience. Similarly, the Alewife scene stands out as a direct moment of social and economic reformation. Chester, like many cities, was concerned with the regulation of victualing trades, and the Alewife scene both communicates legislation and attempts to inculcate a communal rejection of the immoral activities associated with the tavern. Allusions to

Rome tie into Chester's pride over its Roman heritage, as well as its anxiety over a post-reformation association with Rome. The treatment of foreigners and aliens in the play speaks to Chester's experiences as a port city. Every contemporary allusion, every reference to local conditions or traditions, opens a potential parallel narrative, one entirely reliant on the experience of living in Chester in the late Middle Ages. Further study of the play and the historical context will only reveal other potential avenues of exploration, which will, in turn, enable a more complete understanding of the play's cultural function in reflecting and transforming Chester's civic identity.

Chapter Three

The Coventry Play and a City in Crisis

The first indication of a cycle play in Coventry is a 1392 description of a tenement bordered on one side by the Drapers' pageant house. The presence of a pageant house may suggest the existence of a civic cycle, but the structure and content of this cycle does not appear in the records until much later. The cycle was last performed in 1579, nearly two hundred years later, having undergone a number of political and economic transitions and textual revisions, most of which have been lost to history. The only extant texts are the Shearmen and Taylors' pageant, spanning the *Nativity* to the *Slaughter of the Innocents*, and the Weavers' pageant, depicting the *Presentation at the Temple* and *Christ's Disputation with the Doctors*; both texts are sixteenth-century revisions (King and Davidson 5).[94] A record of the city's activities survives in the council, or Leet, books, but many craft records were lost in a fire in 1879 and during an air raid in 1940 (King and Davidson 2). Those remaining generally date from the sixteenth century as well, frustrating scholars' attempts to explain how the cycle came to take the form it did: an apparently condensed production of ten long pageants supported by a network of contributing crafts. Given the fragmentary nature of both play text and historical record, the complete history of Coventry's play will always be to some extent irretrievable, but the evidence available can suggest something of the motivations behind this play and the purpose it served for both the city as a whole and for the crafts involved in pageant production. Understanding the play's role for these two groups allows better hypotheses of the long term history of Coventry's cycle, as well as the social significance of those texts which are extant.

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[94] The original manuscript of the Shearman and Taylor's pageant is no longer extant, but the text has been preserved in Thomas Sharp's 1825 transcription in *A Dissertation on the Pageants*.

In this chapter, I will begin by considering the stated aims of production as they are recorded in council records, and go on to show the divergent motivations which lay behind civic and craft participation in the cycle. Coventry's attempts to fashion itself as the *Camera principis* (Chamber of Princes) points to an outwardly oriented perspective, one particularly concerned with national status, while the historical details surrounding one craft's gradual incorporation in the cycle reflect more inward and spiritual concerns. This first half of the chapter relies on a diachronic exploration to explain the cycle's history, not as "one of contraction and rationalisation" as Pamela M. King has suggested ("York and Coventry" 24), but rather as one of increasing dominance and assimilation on the part of the city.[95] In the second half of the chapter, I read the extant pageants as similarly reflecting the city's dominant gerontocratic ideals. Considering the play from a synchronic perspective, I show how these pageants also reflect a growing disillusionment with these civic ideals in a time of economic crisis.

In 1494, shortly after the mid-point of Coventry's two hundred year cycle-play production, and in response to an economic decline that would become a crisis in the first quarter of the following century, the city chose to intervene in the financial aspects of production. The preamble to the Leet order reveals the monumental nature of the city's decision, and, more significantly, reflects what the city thought the play meant, or ought to mean. The order begins,

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[95] In the introduction to the most recent edition of the extant pageants, Pamela M. King and Clifford Davidson soften this statement, stating instead that "the retrievable history of the cycle is one of rearrangement, rationalization, and probably contraction" (8).

> ffor asmoche as þe vnyte concorde & amyte of all citeez & co*min*alteez is p*r*incipally atteyned & continued be due Ministrac*i*on of Iustice & pollytyk guydyng of þe same forseyng þ*a*t no pe*r*sone be opp*re*ssed nor put to ferther charge then he conuenyently may ber*e* and þ*a*t eu*er*y pe*r*sone withoute fau*our* be cont*r*ibutory aft*er* his substance & faculteez þ*a*t he vseth to eu*er*y charge had & growing for the welth & worship of the hole body and wher*e* so it is in þis Cite of Couentr*e* that dyu*er*s charg*es* haue be conti*nu*ed tyme oute of mynde for the worship of the same as pagant*es* & such other whech haue be born be dyu*er*s Craft*es* whech craft*es* at þe begynnyn of such charg*es* wer*e* mor*e* welthy rich & moo in nomb*re* then nowe be as openly appereth for whech causez they nowe be not of powier to conti*nu*e þe seid Charges w*ith*out relief & comfort be shewed to them. (*REED: Coventry* 79)

The record then names a number of crafts not currently involved in the pageants. It concludes by giving the mayor and his council the authority to assign crafts to the support of the producing crafts, and to set such fines for non-conformity as are deemed necessary.

This preamble attempts to accomplish several things. First, it posits the assumption that unity, concord, and amity are essential and defining qualities of any civic body. These qualities are achieved through the due administration of justice and politic guidance, which are, in turn, directly invested with the power to ensure that no one is overburdened with financial contributions and that all people contribute as they are able. It also casts the mayor and his council as the unnamed maintainers of justice, the men whose "pollytyk guydyng" will ensure the fair distribution of civic expenses. In this way, the fair distribution of expenses is itself defined as the factor most influential to unity, concord, and amity. Finally, the preamble invests the play with the power to contribute to the city's worship as a result of those fairly distributed charges. These statements act as preemptive defensive tactics to justify the council's authority for the order to follow. The fact that the council felt the need to justify their actions in this way suggests an underlying anxiety about that authority, implying that the council's decision to alter the play's financial support structure and to control craft participation challenged the status quo. The preamble urgently attempts to redefine the play as an event of common benefit and responsibility. Moreover, by starting with an assertion about the ideal qualities of cities and commonalities, the council reveals that their primary concern is in fulfilling an assumed ideal of civic identity as opposed to addressing the city's specific circumstances.

The order represents a particular vision of civic government which crafts were literally asked to buy into. It appears to have failed; the order was issued in April 1494, before the play was performed that year on May 29, but it was renewed with some impatience in October of the same year, and this time the benefits are clearer: supporting the play will "principally please god & continue the goode name & fame þat þis Cite hath had in tymes past" (*REED: Coventry* 80). The ideals of unity, concord, and amity are abandoned in favour of a more practical appeal to the realities of the city's failing status and economy.[96] The order still betrays some hope that these contributions can be arranged in the spirit of the civic ideals, since the crafts are ordered, "of their toward loving disposicion [to] applye them self to Ioyn & vnye themselves or to be contributory to other Craft," but it also prepares more realistically for those who will not contribute "of theire goode willes" by setting exorbitant fines of 100s, £10, and 20 marks for the first, second, and third offenses respectively.[97] Moreover, a marginal note adds "all freemen to hold off Some Company" which suggests that some people had avoided contributing by claiming not to belong to a company. By enforcing membership in order to broaden its contribution base, the city showed itself as willing and able to interfere in craft structure and identity, a stance the civic authorities adopted more and more frequently as the economic crisis continued.[98] Significantly, the second order no longer attempts to justify or apologize for the changes it makes to the financial support structure of the play. Instead, it uses the play as a tool to address political and economic problems and to assert civic authority over the craft associations.

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[96] Charles Phythian-Adams identifies the first 1494 order as a "statement of social *mores*" and interprets it as a justification of the relationship between authority and economic standing. He argues that the order awards "the responsibilities (and hence the privileges) of both administering justice and giving politic guidance for the welfare of the community" (*Desolation* 137) to those with financial means. However, the order engages in a redistribution of responsibility whereby every citizen contributes to the best of his (or her) ability "withoute fau*our*," which suggests that all citizens become accountable, not just those in positions of authority. Whether privilege or authority were ever intended to accompany this financial responsibility is open to debate, but the language of the order appeals to communal equality.

Taken together, these two orders suggest that, while some did indeed imagine the play to foster unity, opinions were divided as to how the play contributed to the "honour of the city," who might be obligated to support it, and who was expected to benefit from its production. The city's second, more practical appeal drew attention to the religious and financial benefits rather than ideals of civic unity, and support was more forthcoming, although it is difficult to say whether the logic of the city's argument or the threat of fines was more effective. In either case, at least five crafts began to contribute financially to the play in 1495, and two more were contracted to support pageants in the following decade. By means of these 1494 orders, a cycle which appears initially to have been the responsibility of a comparatively small group of crafts was transformed into a larger civic responsibility. As the following table demonstrates, the number of contributors and shifts in contributions increased dramatically following the city's intervention.

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[97] That is, £5, £10, and £13 6s 8d, as compared to the average contribution of 6s 8d.

[98] In 1520, for example, the Mayor took over the rule of the Butchers and reserved the right to appoint one of the two craft keepers (*Leet* 669), while he had the rule of the Chandlers by 1473 (*Leet* 387). There are frequent Leet orders attempting to control the practices of the victualling trades in particular, but other crafts also came under closer civic jurisdiction. In 1518, for example, the Cappers' searchers were ordered to report to the Mayor, who would himself undertake the correction of craft offenders (*Leet* 663).

Table 4: Chronological Listing of Coventry Pageant Ownership and Contribution[99]

Pageant	**Pageant Owners**	**Contributors pre 1490**	**Contributors post 1490**
Doomsday (1561)	Drapers (by 1392)		
Unknown	Whittawers (by 1407)		Butchers (1495-?)
Passion (1477)	Cutlers/Smiths (by 1420)		Chandlers (1493), Cooks (1494), Bakers (1507)
Presentation and Disputation (1523)	Weavers (by 1424); Cappers (1529 only); Weavers (1529)		Fullers/Walkers (1529-1573), Skinners (1531-1573)
Nativity to Slaughter	Tailors (by 1434); Tailors and Shearmen (by 1450?)		
Harrowing to Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene (1534)	Cardmakers (by 1435); Cardmakers and Saddlers (by 1531); Cappers (1534)	Saddlers and Painters (by 1435), Masons (by 1439)	Painters, Skinners (1495-1531), Barbers (1495-1530); Painters and Carvers (1526, 1531), Cappers (1531-1533); Cardmakers and Saddlers (1574 only), Walkers (1574-9), Skinners (1574-9), Painters and Joiners (1574-9)
Deposition	Tilers and Pinners (by 1414); Tilers, Pinners, and Coopers (by 1515)	Carpenters (1435)	Carpenters
Unknown	Girdlers (by 1495)		Cappers (1495-1529; 1529-30), Fullers/Walkers (1495-1528); Barbers (1531-1552), Painters (1532)
Unknown	Tanners (by 1497)		Corvisors (1507-1524, 1552), Butchers (1552)
Death, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin	Mercers (by 1518)		

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[99] I have collated the information for this table from *REED: Coventry*, with some details supplied by *The Coventry Leet Book* (Harris) and *The Coventry Corpus Christi Plays* (King and Davidson). I have placed the dividing line for contributors at 1490 to include the Chandlers and Cooks, whose contributions are enacted before the 1494 order, but are a part of the same movement to diversify support for the pageants. The dates included in brackets under the Pageant column indicate the first reliable identification of pageant content. Those without dates have been identified by other means (see Appendix 2). All other bracketed dates in the table indicate first references to craft-pageant relationships. Dates listed on their own (i.e. without "by") indicate specific initial dates for the relationship, while the latter years in date ranges indicate last payments or transfers of contributions to other pageants. Semi-colons roughly group periods of transition together. See Appendix 2 for an annotated version of the table.

While it is certainly possible that evidence of pageant ownership and financial contribution is missing, this table suggests that only two pageants required external assistance before the 1490s, whereas contributory relationships were arranged or enforced for six of the ten pageants (not counting the stable, long-standing arrangement with the Carpenters) just prior to or after the 1494 order. Only those crafts which retained a relatively large share of the city's wealth were able to maintain their independence. Both W. G. Hoskins and Charles Phythian-Adams identify the Drapers, Tailors and Shearmen, Cappers (who maintained their pageant independently between 1534 and 1574), and Mercers as being among the leading occupations of the town represented in a 1522 tax assessment (Hoskins 13; Phythian-Adams, *Desolation* 103).[100] These substantial crafts were accordingly able to present their pageants without legislated contribution. In contrast, the economic crisis caused the other pageant owners, most dramatically the Cardmakers and Saddlers, to compromise their independence in favour of financial support for their pageants.

This evidence suggests that the civic involvement in the cycle constituted a significant shift in conception whereby a relatively independent production became a civic affair. Moreover, the 1494 orders and the responses to them demonstrate that the city's objectives for the play were not necessarily the same as the motivations for craft participation. Further examination of Coventry's history demonstrates that the city was generally more concerned with civic identity and national status, and less with the religious aspect of the cycle, while other evidence suggests that the crafts emphasized or were motivated by religious experiences.

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[100] Using Phythian-Adams's interpretation of the assessment numbers, the Drapers, Tailors and Shearmen, Cappers, and Mercers are among the top six occupations, accompanied by the Butchers and Weavers. Appropriately, the Butchers were the first group to contribute to the play after the 1494 orders, and they did so with apparent enthusiasm, on account of their "olde acqueyntaunce & amyte" (*REED: Coventry* 82) with the Whittawers. Similarly, the relative wealth of the Weavers allowed them to hold out until the 1530s before requiring civic intervention and financial assistance from other crafts.

The City and the Play: A Public Relations Event

As R. W. Ingram notes in his introduction to the Coventry dramatic records, "The rulers of the cycle were well aware that it was a national and not a merely local event, that it was a sacred entertainment which drew people from all over England" (xvii). The second order's emphasis on the city's failing "goode name & fame" reflects the concern with Coventry's status on a national scale as well as anxiety over the city's economy. In *The Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages*, Phythian-Adams discusses Coventry's financial crisis in detail. The declining cloth trade, which impacted all of England in the mid-fifteenth century, and Coventry's central political and geographical position in the civil wars between the House of York and the House of Lancaster generally reduced trade and siphoned funds out of the city, which in turn led to the depletion—or desertion—of the city's wealthier employers. The first half of the sixteenth century saw these problems compounded by famine and pestilence, which further reduced the city's population.[101] In light of this financial and demographic crisis, the continued presentation of an annual Corpus Christi play argues for a purpose beyond local celebration, a purpose reflected in the national renown "þat þis Cite hath had in tymes past" (*REED: Coventry* 80).

This nostalgic perspective recalls Coventry's historical relationship with royalty in general and with respect to the play in particular. Early in Coventry's history, Queen Isabella, having inherited the Cheylesmore manor in Coventry, settled a dispute between the city and its adjoining priory in the city's favour. By the terms of the 1355 tripartite indenture, "the area of the Prior's Half and the prior's judicial rights were greatly reduced, most of the latter being vested in the mayor and commonality" (*VCH: Coventry* 3). The manor became a favourite retreat of the Queen, and later of Edward, the Black Prince. The city in turn demonstrated its gratitude—and status—by adopting the phrase *Camera Principis* as its motto. Christian Liddy argues that the term was first coined in 1456, in connection to a royal entry by Margaret of Anjou (339), but acknowledges that other scholars attribute the phrase to the Black Prince's residence in the city.[102] Whether of fourteenth- or fifteenth-century origin, the concept of the chamber is "a powerful metaphor . . . appropriated to articulate and re-negotiate [the city's] relations with the crown at times of acute political tension" (Liddy 324), and Liddy argues that "the chamber became an important symbol of civic identity" (325). Phythian-Adams similarly identifies a strong civic connection with nobility through the city's two religious guilds:

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[101] These statements summarize Phythian-Adams arguments in Part 2 of *Desolation of a City*.

> Not only ecclesiastical dignitaries and numerous parish priests, but also gentlemen, esquires, and even the odd knight, attended the meetings of the Corpus Christi Gild. As prince or king, the Trinity Gild had boasted as members, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI and Henry VII, as well as a more marked complement of knights and lords than the junior Gild. (*Desolation* 140)

While perhaps coincidental, it is worth recalling that there is evidence of at least one Coventry pageant by 1392, only sixteen years after the death of the Black Prince in 1376. In fact, Ingram suggests that "it is more likely . . . that the cycle had been played at least as early as the 1380s" (*REED: Coventry* xvii). This potential association between

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[102] See, for example, Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City*, 140, and *VCH:Coventry*, 19.

Edward's death and the play's conception may suggest that the city was actively inventing or encouraging the invention of incentives for future royal patronage. Regardless, the city's relationship with nobility suggests that, unlike the plays of other cities, the civic authorities saw Coventry's play being directed as much to non-citizens as to the local inhabitants. Among royalty drawn to see the play were Queen Margaret (1457), King Richard III (1485), and Henry VII (1487). Henry seemingly enjoyed the play so much that he brought his wife, Elizabeth, to see it again a few years later (1491). Coventry also saw visits from royal children, including the three-year-old Prince Edward (1474), twelve-year-old Prince Arthur (1498), and ten-year-old Princess Mary (1526). The two princes were entertained by a mixture of biblical, mythical, and historical figures who performed specially composed speeches (*REED: Coventry* 523-55, 89-91), but the Princess specifically saw the Mercers' pageant (*REED: Coventry* 125), which probably represented the Death, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin Mary (King and Davidson 41-2). This emphasis on presentation to the royal children invokes Coventry's self-proclaimed status as the Chamber of Princes. Liddy notes that the use of this phrase during the mid-fifteenth century served as "a declaration of the city's loyalty to the Lancastrian line" (341), and that the same concept was later refashioned to confirm the legitimacy of the York and Tudor dynasties in turn (344). In this context, the city valued the play's potential to entice the nation's cosmopolitan nobility. From a civic perspective, the play was not performed for the citizens, but on behalf of the city as a whole, as an attempt to draw the attention and favour of the wealthiest people in the land.

The Crafts and Pageants: Spiritual Motivations

While it is not particularly surprising that the civic council would wish to enhance the city's status as a whole, and that the cycle would serve as one tactic in that strategy, it does not follow that the city's crafts had the same motivations for participating in the play. The two orders from 1494 suggest that the pageants were considered the purview of the oldest and wealthiest crafts, those who were "more welthy rich & moo in nombre then nowe be" at the play's beginning. They also imply that an appeal to cost sharing on the basis of communal feeling and ideal civic values met with little success, if not outright resistance. The success of the second order's more practical appeal to religious feeling and financial stability suggests that these were the issues that the crafts cared about. The paucity of records surrounding the origin of the cycle in Coventry and the first one hundred years of its development make it difficult to determine why the original group of crafts chose to participate. However, after 1494, one craft (the Cappers) moved gradually from the position of financial contributor to that of a pageant owner. The records detailing this transition shed light on the rationale for participation of at least this one group, and perhaps on the motivations of other contributors and pageant owners.

The Cappers were a late arrival in Coventry, but they developed swiftly into a powerful craft.[103] They do not appear in a fairly inclusive 1450 arms survey (*REED: Coventry* 544-5; *Leet* 246-252), but they registered their ordinances in 1496 (*Leet* 572-574) and the city thereafter "saw the take-off and meteoric rise of the capping industry" in which "the numbers of masters . . . practically trebled between 1496 and 1550" (Phythian-Adams, *Desolation* 44). Certainly the economic success of the Cappers enabled their eventual assumption of a pageant, for the productions were expensive. In later years, when the Cappers had full responsibility for their pageant, they generally spent 30-40s annually, and sometimes as much as 60s-70s on performances, while in 1565 they spent as much as 89s (Ingram, "To Find the Players" 22-3).[104] In comparison, it is worth noting that master Carpenters' wages were set at 8d per day in 1553, while common labourers were limited to 5d per day (*Leet* 806-7).[105] Similarly, a sextary (or thirteen gallons) of ale generally sold for 18d in the first half of the sixteenth century, peaking once in 1528 at the rate of 2s (*Leet* 678, 696, 710, 713). While inflation did affect wages and the cost of basic staples, it did not account for the vast sums spent on pageant production. Yet, despite the Cappers' financial ability to make the transition from supporter to owner, it does not appear to have been the initial motivation for their shift.

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[103] Cappers are not to be confused with Hatmakers, who were made a subsidiary group of the Mercers in 1492 (*Leet* 545). Cappers made knitted caps, while Hatmakers made hats out of felt and fur. The lines dividing crafts were not always firm, however, as evidenced by the conflicts between Mercers and Cappers in Chester (see Chp 1). Phythian-Adams also notes that, as late as 1566, some Coventry Mercers were identified as trading in "hats, caps, and trimmings thereof" (*Desolation* 100 n. 11).

In 1495, and in response to the Leet orders of the previous year, the Cappers and Fullers agreed to contribute 13s 4d, or the equivalent of 6s 8d per craft, to the Girdlers' "priste & pageant" (*REED: Coventry* 83).[106] For the Cappers, at least, this arrangement appears to have continued up to 1525, despite a reported slump in economic activity in 1523 (Phythian-Adams, *Desolation* 61).[107] A further payment for 1526 may be recorded in the ambiguous entry for "almna*er* of payments and offrynge*s*" (*REED: Coventry* 126), but no payments are recorded for 1527 or 1528. It is not clear why, but the contributory arrangement between the Cappers and the Girdlers had dissolved by April, 1529, when the City council made the Cappers the new owners of the Weavers' pageant (*REED: Coventry* 128). Evidently the new arrangement was unsatisfactory to all parties, since, in October of the same year (notably after that year's Corpus Christi production on May 27), the Weavers were reinstated to their pageant, and the Cappers were again commanded to contribute to the Girdlers. Their payment, however, was now doubled. The Fullers were to shift their contribution to the newly reinstated Weavers, while the Cappers were to answer for the full payment of 13s 4d to the Girdlers by themselves (*REED: Coventry* 129). A year later, in September of 1530, the Cappers were again discharged of their contribution to the Girdlers, this time ambiguously "for certeyn consideracions alleged" (*REED: Coventry* 130).[108] The implication is that either the Girdlers were misusing the funds, or the Cappers were not reaping the expected benefits

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[104] The higher amounts generally included extensive repairs to the pageant wagon or significant refurbishment of props and costumes. As such, they do not reflect a trend of increased production expenses, but rather a sporadic fluctuation based on production needs in any given year.

[105] These were summer rates. Winter rates were lower: 6d for master carpenters and 3d for common labourers.

[106] Similar arrangements among other crafts specify that each party will pay 6s 8d, and the Cappers' later recorded payments are for this amount. Phythian-Adams sees this agreement, along with two other records, as evidence that Cappers were initially associated with the Fullers (*Desolation* 100-1), but the associations are coincidental. The order for the Cappers and Fullers to support the Girdlers pageant does not necessarily assert a link between the two groups, while an association of Cappers and Fullers in a list of crafts outfitting of soldiers (*Leet* 583), accompanies other unusual and probably one-time partnerships, such as the Mercers and Fishmongers, Drapers and Skinners, and Dyers and Barbers.

Phythian-Adams's final example is an order forbidding Fullers to mill caps with cloth, and Cappers to mill caps between Saturday and Sunday evensongs dated 1514. Coming nearly 20 years after the Cappers had registered their ordinances as an independent fellowship, the Leet order appears to associate the two groups only because they handle the same product, not because they were potentially evolved from the same group of craftsmen.

[107] Payments are recorded only for the years 1520-5 (*REED: Coventry* 115, 117, 119, 120, 121, 123), but there is nothing to suggest that they were not made earlier.

[108] The order specifically discharges the Cappers from their customary 6s 8d payment, not the double payment assigned to them the year previously. While there are several possible explanations for this (including scribal error in either record) it is not likely that the council would discharge the Cappers if they were misrepresenting their responsibility or refusing to pay the full assigned amount. The Cappers would have had to present a valid complaint in order to secure release from the payment, regardless of the amount.

of their increased contribution. The Cappers were given one year's respite before a satisfactory arrangement was finally achieved in October of 1531 between the Cardmakers and Saddlers, one the one hand, and the Cappers on the other (*REED: Coventry* 131-3). Nearly six years later, in 1537, the Cardmakers and Saddlers abandoned their pageant to the Cappers altogether. The following timeline summarizes the key transitions of the Cappers' path to pageant ownership:

Table 5: Timeline of Coventry Cappers' Cycle Participation

1495 (Apr)	Cappers contribute 6s 8d to Girdlers' priest and pageant
1529 (Apr)	Cappers discharged from Girdlers' pageant and given Weavers' pageant
1529 (Oct)	Weavers regain pageant; Cappers contribute 13s 4d to Girdlers' pageant
1530 (Sept)	Cappers discharged from Girdlers' pageant
1531 (Oct)	Cappers contribute to Cardmakers and Saddlers' pageant
1537 (Jan)	Cardmakers and Saddlers discharged from Cappers' pageant

It is the record of the 1531 agreement between the Cappers and the Cardmakers and Saddlers which explains the Cappers' motivations for pageant ownership. This record begins by acknowledging the Cardmakers and Saddlers long-standing responsibility for the Chapel of St. Thomas in St. Michael's Church and for a pageant in the city's play. Because the number of craft members had fallen, the craft was no longer capable of maintaining the chapel and pageant. The record then notes that the Cappers, "now beyng in nomber meny welthy & honest persones," had made "dyuers tymes Sute & request . . . to haue a certeyn place to theme assigned & lymyted as dyuers other Craftes haue to sitt to gether in ther seid parishe Churche to here ther dyuyne seruice." In return, they are willing to "bere suche charges for the same as by Maister Meire & his brethern the Aldermen shalbe assigned" (*REED: Coventry* 131). In other words, it is in response to the Cardmakers and Saddlers' penury and the Cappers' desire for a chapel that the council orders the two crafts to support the chapel and pageant together. After specifying the responsibilities and financial transactions of this new relationship, the record confirms the Cappers' rights to the chapel, where they "shall fromehensfurthe famyliarlie & louynglie accompeny & sitt togethers in the seid Chappell W*ith* the seid company & craft of Caremakers & Sadelers to here ther dyvyne s*er*vice" (*REED: Coventry* 133). The council took care to avoid future conflict by specifying that the two groups would alternate seating arrangements annually. By 1537, almost six years later, the Cardmakers and Saddlers' fortunes had fallen even further, and they gave up all rights and responsibilities, save the right to have four members sit in the chapel during service (*REED: Coventry* 144-6). Like the Cappers, their first concern was for access to a sacred space.

Other scholars have noted the inclusion of the chapel in the negotiations between the Cappers and the Cardmakers and Saddlers, but they have generally assumed that the desire for a chapel was adjunct to the desire for a pageant. Ingram asserts, for example, that the Cappers "wanted not only their own pageant but [sic] their own chapel in the great parish church of St. Michael" ("To Find the Players" 20), while King and Davidson read the Cappers' brief possession of the Weavers' pageant as evidence that the craft "aggressively pursued the right to present a play of their own" (33-4). They, too, imply a secondary priority to the possession of a chapel, noting that the Cappers obtained, "not only the pageant but also the chapel formerly possessed by the Cardmakers and Saddlers in St. Michael's Church" (34). These analyses overlook the specificity of the 1531 contract and overemphasize the role of the pageant in the negotiations. At no point in the agreement do the Cappers express a desire for the pageant, while the wording implies that what they have aggressively sought is access to a chapel.

This emphasis on the Cappers' desire for a chapel not only explains their motivations for taking on a pageant, but also sheds light on their interactions with other pageant owners. Notably, their first agreement with the Girdlers is to support both priest and pageant, and it seems plausible that the considerations which divided the two groups the second time were over access to the Girdlers' Chapel in St. Michael's. Similarly, the rapid possession and relinquishment of the Weavers' pageant may also be attributable to conflicting interests in a chapel. The Weavers were one of two crafts to possess their own free-standing chapel, and the Cappers may well have assumed that responsibility for the pageant granted them access to, or even ownership of, that chapel, a claim the Weavers would certainly have disputed.

Davidson is the only scholar to consider why the Cappers might have wanted a chapel in the first place. "The linking together of chapel and pageant," he notes, "is indicative of the joining of economic, political and religious aspects of life in late medieval Coventry. To have the control of the Chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury where the Cappers' guild might worship together with all its members seated according to rank was a sign of its prestige and its economic success as well as its religious commitment" ("Civic Drama" 152). While prestige and economic success were certainly aspects of chapel ownership, Davidson's emphasis on the chapel as a space "where the Cappers' craft might worship together" is also significant, particularly with respect to the centrality of the Eucharist to later medieval culture. In "The York Plays and the Feast of Corpus Christi: A Reconsideration," King asserts that the laity's "chief relationship with the Eucharist was a visual one" (16) and that, because the physical act of taking communion was comparatively rare for the laity, "regular eucharistic worship . . . focused on the need to look on the consecrated host" (18). As the central signifying ritual in the Roman Catholic faith, the elevation and moment of transubstantiation was accompanied with actions meant to involve nearly every sense: bells were rung, incense was burned, and candles were lit, the latter again emphasizing the importance of seeing the host. King goes on to discuss the importance of the seen-host with respect to the presentation of Christ in the York Corpus Christi play, but the underlying argument—that the Mass was a primarily visual experience—helps to explain the Cappers' petition for a chapel. The raising of the Eucharist at the high altar would have been partially obscured by a rood screen, a wooden lattice meant to separate the sacred and public sections of the church, but simultaneous elevations would have occurred in every chapel. Ownership of a chapel would have been distinct from the ownership of a secular craft space in that it literally brought its members closer to God during the miracle of the Mass. If the chapel maintained a monstrance as well, then chapel ownership would equate with the right of primary access to the host, and might be seen as a symbolic ownership of the body of Christ. Chapel ownership, then, had the potential to both augment the religious experience and invest the craft with religious status.

The idea that access to a chapel was the first priority of the crafts supporting the pageants is confirmed by the history of the Corvisers' involvement in the cycle. The Corvisers were assigned to support the Tanners in their pageant in 1507, and the order was again confirmed in 1509 (*REED: Coventry* 102-3, 104). In 1524, however, the Corvisers were released from supporting the Tanners as long as they would undertake to "fynde & keip ther preist" (*Leet* 687).[109] In other words, once the craft had made arrangements for its own access to divine services, it successfully distanced itself from responsibility for the pageant, suggesting that their incentive for participation in the cycle had been access to the Tanners' chapel. The fact that the city sanctioned this retraction of financial support implies that access to religious services was recognized as the key negotiating factor in these relationships, and that the city was not yet in a position to enforce contribution without arranging for recompense. By 1552, however, increased financial difficulties overrode these considerations, and the Leet again required the Corvisers to contribute to the Tanners' pageant, on the simple logic that the Tanners "be not of such substance as they haue bin in tymes past to mentayne the padiant," while the Corvisers "be not chardged" (*REED: Coventry* 192). While the use of a chapel could initially serve as an object of negotiation between crafts and the city, eventually the city's authority dominated these relationships.

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[109] Phythian-Adams draws attention to this order (*Desolation* 216).

This emphasis on chapels in later negotiations also draws attention to an earlier correlation between pageant and chapel ownership. As the table on the following page demonstrates, the list of pageant owners in Coventry is remarkably similar to the list of chapel owners:

Table 6: Coventry Crafts with Pageants and/or Chapels[110]

Crafts	Pageant	Chapel	Chapel Locations, etc
Cardmakers and Saddlers/Cappers	✓	✓	St. Thomas's Chapel, St. Michael's
Smiths	✓	✓	St. Andrew's Chapel, St. Michael's
Drapers	✓	✓	St. Mary's altar and Chapel, St. Michael's; after 1450, St. Mary and All Saints Chapel, St. Michael's
Dyers		✓	St. Thomas's Chapel, Holy Trinity; unidentified Chapel, St. Michael's
Girdlers	✓	✓	unidentified Chapel, St. Michael's
Mercers	✓	✓	unidentified Chapel, Holy Trinity and St. Katherine's Chapel, St. Michael's
Pinners and Tilers	✓		
Shearmen and Tailors	✓	✓	St. George by Gosford Gate
Tanners	✓	✓	Holy Trinity Chapel, Holy Trinity
Weavers	✓	✓	St. James and St. Christopher, Christopher Chapel, St. Christopher and St. Julian
Whittawers	✓		

Only the Dyers appear to have owned a chapel without having responsibility for a pageant, while only the crafts of Pinners and Tilers, and that of the Whittawers (white-leather workers) maintained pageants without possessing a chapel.[111] Given that there were approximately thirty-three distinct crafts in the city (Phythian-Adams, *Desolation* 100), the close correlation between pageants and chapels for eight of ten pageant owners is remarkable. This correlation suggests two things. First, while scholars no longer accept an evolutionary relationship between liturgical and civic biblical drama and, increasingly, there are strong arguments for the presence of secular, as opposed to clerical, authors and revisers, the Coventry play literally came out of the church, although still within the hands of that sacred space's secular inhabitants. Second, in its early form, the Coventry play was the purview of an elite group of crafts, most of which were wealthy enough to support a chapel as well as a pageant; it was not a civic venture. It only became so when the combination of the pressures of economic crisis and the city's growing concern with national status coincided, such that the city felt justified in taking control of the pageants' financial stability. This shift in the play's essential identity and purpose is what lies behind the careful wording of the 1494 orders.

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[110] I have compiled this table from *Reed: Coventry* and *VCH: Coventry* (324, 348-9), but there may be some craft-chapel associations missing. There were, for example, many chapels and chantries dedicated to particular persons or families, and these may disguise craft associations. Similarly, while the Corvisers employed a priest in 1524, there is no indication of where this priest was stationed.

[111] The Dyers are identified in the 1494 order as a possible candidate to provide financial support for the pageants, but they are never associated with a pageant. The simplest explanation is that the Dyers avoided contributing, perhaps because they served the city in some other way, but it is possible that they were involved in the play earlier and had obtained a discharge from responsibility along with a guarantee that they would never again be obligated to participate in or support a pageant. The Cardmakers and Saddlers make such an arrangement in 1537 (*REED: Coventry* 146), and appear to bring the guarantee successfully to bear between 1574 and 1575. In a new financial arrangement of 1574, they make a contribution to the Cappers' pageant along with the Walkers, Skinners, Painters and Joiners (*REED: Coventry* 266), but thereafter, the Cardmakers and Saddlers are absent from this list of contributors.

The history of the Cappers in Coventry demonstrates that the crafts' and city's motivations for producing the Corpus Christi cycle could be entirely divergent. In Coventry, the city fought a losing battle to staunch economic haemorrhaging by ensuring the continued financial support of their nationally famous production.[112] In contrast, the Cappers, and perhaps all pageant owners and contributors in Coventry, were, at the start, more concerned with their spiritual or religious status, than with commercial or political concerns.

The Play and the People: The Anxiety of a City in Crisis

While civic and craft motivations for pageant production differed, the text of the play served to represent the city as a whole to its audiences. Phythian-Adams has argued cogently that "Ritual was a living mirror of the city," the means by which "the community dramatized its own image of itself: idealizing, in public before crowds of spectators; distortively amongst themselves" (*Desolation* 178). As he points out in "Ceremony and the Citizen," the most notable distortion was the exclusion of women and common labourers (i.e. non-craftsmen) from these rituals and the undermining or denigration of these figures when represented (58-9). For those remaining, these rituals "were the visible means of relating individuals to the social structure" (59), but the mirror of the Corpus Christi cycle still presented a distorted reflection. Beyond the patina of the biblical story being enacted, the play glorified and mourned the failure of the gerontocratic system characteristic of Coventry's civic structure.

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[112] Phythian-Adams uses the word "haemorrhage" (199) in *Desolation of a City.*

Phythian-Adams discusses this gerontocratic system in "Ceremony and the Citizen" (60-1), although he first applies the term "gerontocratic" to the civic structure in *Desolation of a City* (114). What he calls the "successful citizen" would progress through the civic hierarchy, starting with minor craft offices such as summoner or beadle and culminating in the upper echelons of the mayoralty and council (*Desolation* 125-6). The city's two religious guilds, the Corpus Christi Guild and the Trinity Guild, formed a key part of this system. Citizens who aspired to higher civic positions would join the Corpus Christi Guild fairly early in their careers and soon take on minor civic functions, such as chamberlain or warden, which in turn lead to membership in the common council.[113] Ten to fifteen years later, these men would transfer to the Trinity Guild and become eligible for the position of sheriff and membership in the Leet. Even later on, a citizen might become, in close succession, master of the Corpus Christi Guild, mayor, and finally master of the Trinity Guild, thereby securing his position as an alderman for the rest of his life. Given that these last three positions were usually taken up by men in their fifties and sixties, their stint on the council might not be long, but the system ensured that the most experienced men were at the top of the hierarchy. Progress through the system was effectively limited to the wealthier trades, generally the mercantile ones, due to the costs incurred by these offices, but the system was also fairly flexible and allowed new participants to rise regularly through the ranks. However, in times of crisis, such as that which peaked between 1518 and 1525, the system broke down. This occurred both because of a lack of eligible participants, a factor Phythian-Adams discusses in detail,[114] and because the system tended to entrench the more conservative, older members of society in the highest positions of authority. In 1539, for example, Mayor Coton had to appeal to Cromwell's external authority for assistance in changing civic traditions that were proving detrimental in a time of economic crisis, because the aldermen, all ex-mayors themselves, "being past all suche offices & charges do little regarde theme that be to com / ner do not esteem the vndoyng of half a dosen honest Co*mene*r*s* to be so ill a deid / as is the omyttyng & lesyng of on accustomed drynkyng" (*REED: Coventry* 149).

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[113] What follows is an over-simplification of Phythian-Adams's own "bald summary" of the gerontocratic system (125) described in more detail in chapters 7-9 of *Desolation of a City*. I use masculine pronouns throughout this section because only men were eligible for these offices.

Theresa Coletti first made the connection between this gerontocratic system and the two extant texts of the Coventry cycle (both revised or rewritten by Robert Croo in 1535).[115] In "Reading REED: History and the Records of Early English Drama," she briefly argues that "The central conflict in each [pageant] is between youth and age" (279), and suggests that "the plays . . . show mature authority [as] either in possession of the right information or able to accept it when it comes along. Thus elders are not simply superseded; they are incorporated into the new order and truth signified by the birth of Christ" (280). Brandon Alakas makes a similar point in "Seniority and Mastery: The Politics of Ageism in the Coventry Cycle," where he outlines the pageants' representations of age in more detail. In particular, Alakas demonstrates how the Weavers' text of the *Presentation in the Temple* and *Christ and the Doctors* explores the function of age in familial, craft, and civic relationships, and he draws attention to the way that the pageants "play on the semantic ranges of certain words such as *misteri* and *maister* in order to collapse further events portrayed on stage with the everyday lives of the audience" (21). The Weavers' pageant begins with a discussion between two prophets, followed by an extended Presentation sequence which includes both a long lamentation by Simeon concerning his advanced age and several comic episodes surrounding Joseph's old age and his marriage to a young wife.[116] The final section of the pageant involves the holy family's journey to Jerusalem during a festival, their loss of Jesus on the way home, and their eventual discovery of him in disputation with the Doctors, whom he has impressed with his knowledge of the Ten Commandments. While Alakas reads "Joseph's diminished status" and "loss of authority within the household" (22) as a negative representation of age, he sees the discussion between the two prophets as a triumphant depiction of age-related authority in the master-apprentice relationship. He comments that the prophets' biblical gloss is expressed "in language capable of spanning the two worlds of biblical narrative and artisanal culture" (23). In particular, he notes that the second prophet's "desire to know *where* and *how* this 'worthe mystere' is to be 'vsid' seems slightly out of place in a theological linguistic register," but that "his desire to understand the function and application of this knowledge makes perfect sense within an artisanal context" (24). Although Alakas does not note it, a similar relationship is developed between Simeon and his clerks. When an Angel warns Simeon that Christ will arrive later in the day, he commands his clerks to "wayte *and* se*r*ve w*ith* all delegence" (338), and one clerk replies,

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[114] Part IV "An Anatomy Deformed" of *Desolation of a City* details the overall depopulation of the city as well as the specific problems of low replacement rates for servants and children.

[115] All references to the text of the Coventry pageants will be by line number to King and Davidson's edition. Colophons at the end of the two pageants state that the Shearmen and Taylors' pageant was "nevly correcte" (109) on March 14 and the Weavers' pageant was "nevly translate" (148) on March 2 in 1534, which King and Davidson identify as an old style dating for 1535. Corpus Christi that year fell on May 27, which suggests a rehearsal period of 2 ½ to 3 months (or 8-10 weeks).

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[116] Other cycles develop the comedy of the May-December marriage before the Nativity, but Coventry is the only cycle to include this comic element after Christ is born.

> To se*r*ve a prynce of soche magneffecens,
> S*ir*, I wasse neu*er* wont therto.
> Sythe ye þ*er*in hathe more intelligence,
> Instructe me, s*ir*, how þat I schuld do
> Lest that I do offende. (340-4)

Simeon is in turn impressed with his clerk's desire to learn, saying, "Sith that ye for knoleyge dothe make sute, / Your wyttis the bettur do I reypute" (349-50), and he proceeds to instruct the clerks in their duties. Later, when Christ approaches, he urges the clerks into position, and one responds, "Loo, mastur, bothe man *and* place, / Be all redde at your byddeng" (618-9). As with the second prophet, the clerks act as the ideal apprentices, deferring to the wisdom and experience of their master, and portraying obedience and a desire to learn. Between the prophets and Simeon with his clerks, the ideal of gerontocratic authority in craft relationships would appear to be intact.[117]

Alakas contrasts this appearance of stable craft gerontocracy with that of the civic system as represented in the interactions between Christ and the Doctors. While Alakas provides little evidence for reading this scene in a civic context, the Doctors' opening lines do situate the scene in this way.[118] Without identifying himself, the first Doctor seizes the audience's attention, saying,

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[117] The transfer of gerontocratic authority from civic to craft relationships potentially moves the ideal into the realm of fantasy, particularly as Weavers were generally excluded from civic office.

> Now, lordyngis, lystun to me a whyle,
> Wyche hathe the lawis vndur honde,
> And that no man fawll in soche p*er*ell
> Agenst any artyccull for to stand,
> For the come*n* statute of this lande
> Woll that all such p*er*sonys schulde be tane,
> And in the face of peple oopon*n*ly slayne. (850-56)

The audience has no idea what law the Doctor is discussing but knows that it is a serious and specifically secular matter, since the penalty is death. Moreover, the language of this opening speech echoes expressions used in Leet orders, like the one of 1494, in its concern for the administration of justice and its emphasis on common statutes. While the second Doctor identifies the characters as clergy disputing the Commandments, he notes that their discussion uses "polatike syence" (863), again invoking the language of secular authority. Finally, the third Doctor formally commands the audience to

> now draw nere,
> And in this place gewe your attendence.
> How ye schuld lyve here ma you lere,
> Acordyng vnto your aleygence;
> For yt ys well knowe vnto this presence

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[118] His arguments for reading this section as a reflection of the civic structure focus on language which he describes throughout as artisanal. I see this language as evidence that the scene simultaneously reflects both civic and craft interactions.

> Thatt doctoris we ar and of hy degree,
>
> And haue the lawis in custode. (864-70)

While there is no record of how Leet sessions were called to order, this speech implies a formal legal gathering as much as a religious disputation, and could perhaps have been a direct reference to Leet practices for local members of the audience. Certainly, these opening lines firmly establish the Doctors as civic leaders.[119] At the same time, it is possible to read the scene as a commentary on craft practices as well. Alakas notes that the artisanal language which characterizes the other two scenes in the pageant continue into this scene: references to "*secrettis*" and "*mystere*" (28) invoke a craft discourse, while Christ's recitation of the fourth commandment "demonstrates a greater sensitivity towards the material realities of living in a highly competitive commercial market" (26). This language in turn constructs the Doctors as craft masters. In other words, while this section of the pageant is about the biblical story of Christ's disputation with the Doctors, it is also about both civic and craft authority.

With respect to civic authority, Alakas concludes that "this pageant appears to take aim at and dismantle the discourse which the city's aldermanic clique used to position itself at the head of the civic corporation" (30). He ultimately argues, however, that the Weavers "present a vision wherein a gerontocratic ideal gives way to a more equitable and less stratified set of social arrangements as the Doctors finally admit Christ among their ranks" (30). It is at this point that I disagree with Alakas's conclusions.

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[119] There are four extant texts, from York, Chester, Towneley, and Coventry, of the Christ and the Doctors episode which are analogues of each other, although York is believed to be the earliest. While all versions stress the Doctors' authority over the laws, significantly, none of the other versions use words like "artyccull," "come*n* statute," "polatike," or "aleygence," words which suggest a secular context; nor do the other versions delay recognition of the Doctors as religious (as opposed to secular) figures the way Coventry's version does.

While the *Christ and the Doctors* episode does indeed reflect anxieties about threats to and the failure of the gerontocratic system, these anxieties are not resolved by the Doctors' acceptance of Christ, because Christ does not stay with them. His departure at the end of the pageant signals a disruption of traditional craft and civic practices, and the pageant ends on a troubled note wherein both the Doctors and Christ's parents express particular social anxieties.

As Daniel Kline notes in his comparison of the four analogous *Christ and the Doctors* pageants, Coventry's Christ is "the most recognizably childlike figure of the four plays" (352).[120] Alakas sees this as emphasizing the age difference between Christ and the other characters (25), but speeches about and to Christ also characterize his youth as something which makes him precious. From the moment that the holy family leaves Simeon's temple, Mary and Joseph repeatedly marvel at their good fortune in having a "soo goodly a childe" (721) who "waxith feyre *and* large" (729). Mary dotes on Jesus, calling him "he that I love most dere, / My joie, my myrthe, and all my pley" (737-8), and demonstrates anxiety about losing her child in the crowd well before Christ slips away. When he does disappear, both Mary and Joseph exhibit genuine distress, and Mary's tone of despair and anguish is heightened by Joseph's unsuccessful attempts to console her.[121]

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[120] Kline argues that each city "presents a distinctively structured version of the disputation" and that the outcome of the disputation in each play results in a unique "articulation of principles which must be seen as the basis of new community" (344-5). With respect to Coventry, Kline concludes, "The Coventry play especially illustrates neighborly love, for Jesus's divinity here, as in Towneley, is marked by human relations" (354). Given the city's long-term economic and demographic crisis, the emphasis on neighbourly love and community in Croo's version of the text may reflect the social qualities which were essential to Coventry's continued survival. Certainly the city was remarkable in conducting two censuses (in 1520 and 1523) and a survey of available grain resources (in 1520), as well as making early provision to distinguish the deserving poor from idlers, all of which indicates a strong sense of social responsibility.

[121] Only York (Beadle 174-181) includes a similar development of parental distress. While the section dealing with the discovery of Christ's absence is longer in the York text (34 lines as compared to 28 lines in Coventry), the rapidity of dialogue in the Coventry version heightens the anxiety of the shorter scene. There are eight shifts between characters in the York version, with an average of four lines per

In contrast, Mary's relief when they find Jesus is palpable, an effect not achieved in the other *Christ and the Doctors* pageants, despite the similarity of language in the reunion passages, because the other versions to do not establish the emotional involvement at the start of the episode to the same degree. The result is that the character of Jesus becomes purposefully invested with the qualities of childhood (as opposed to divinity or even burgeoning maturity); he is not just an abstract representation of childhood, but the specific child of loving and human parents. The figural distance of the holy family is effectively stripped, and audience members are invited to empathize with these religious figures based on a common experience of parenthood.

The scene which follows the reunion of the holy family is unique to Coventry and speaks volumes in the context of demographic crisis. At the beginning of the *Christ and the Doctors* section, Mary specifically identifies Jesus as being "xij yere of age" (727), the age which Phythian-Adams equates with the beginning of adolescence in Coventry. He identifies this as the age when boys were included in the tithing system, positing that "only in wealthier households did boys remain at home after that age" (*Desolation* 83).[122] As the son of a carpenter, Jesus would be of an age to go into service or take up an

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exchange, including both an 8- and a 6-line passage and only one instance of a 2-line passage. In contrast, there are nine shifts between characters in the Coventry version, with an average of three lines per exchange, of which five are 4-line passages, and four are 2-line passages. The 6- and 8- line sections of the York version might allow an actor to gain momentum in developing an emotional register, but they also encourage more stylized representations, whereas the rapid dialogue of the Coventry version suggests a more naturalistic portrayal of distress.

[122] Phythian-Adams also draws attention to Christ's age in the Weavers' pageant, and he discusses the age of adolescence further in Chapter 21 "Children and the Future" (*Desolation* 83, 229-30).

apprenticeship.[123] It is not surprising, then, that when Jesus bids farewell to the Doctors, they express an interest in having him stay:

> DOCTOR II. Now that Lorde of lordis be thy spede
> Where eyu*er* thow goo in any cruoft,
> But yff thow wolt tarre thow schalt not nede
> Any more to put thy fryndis to cost.
> DOCTOR III. How seyst thow, fathur, for thy good wyll?
> Wolt thow grant þi help thyre tyll
> Awey thatt, *sir*, he do not goo? (1079-85)

In the context of artisanal language which constructs these Doctors as craft masters, and in conjunction with the second Doctor's intimation that Jesus need no longer be a financial burden on his parents, these lines imply that Jesus is invited to become a student or apprentice. As Phythian-Adams notes, several craft ordinances specified that masters were expected to provide their apprentices with room and board (*Desolation* 83). The third Doctor's appeal to Joseph as the nominal head of the household acknowledges the father-figure as the owner of Christ's potential labour, while the reference to the "help" which Joseph can grant may euphemistically refer to the financial aspects of apprenticeship negotiation.[124] What is surprising is the vehemence with which Joseph and Mary resist this suggestion. Joseph will not part with his son "for frynde nor foo"

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[123] A third option would include going to school. Reading Jesus as a potential student echoes the biblical scene most closely, but does not attend to the artisanal and civic language of the Coventry pageant. Nonetheless, it may be fruitful to explore the history and practices of schools in medieval Coventry to see if the language of this scene resonates on that level as well.

[124] Apprentices had to pay, at the least, a civic indenturing fee of 12-24d (Phythian-Adams, *Desolation* 45). With respect to Joseph's authority, Alakas demonstrates that Mary functions as the actual head of the household (20-3).

(1088), while Mary begs the Doctors "Do ye not wyll my chylde fro me," adding, "For w*ith* my wyll yt schall nott be / Whyle that owre lyvis last" (1093-6). This reluctance to part with a child at the age of apprenticeship seems perverse, and the first Doctor's response betrays an impatient frustration:

> Then yt ys noo bote for to intreyte,
> Thy chylde I see I canot gete;
> I tro yt be but wast to speyke,
> Thatt tyme I thynke ys past. (1097-1100)

Jesus again bids the Doctors farewell, and the second Doctor speaks for them all when he tells Christ to visit them if he passes that way again, but his speech ends ominously when he adds, "Yff thow to age lyve may, / Thy fryndis ma be full glade" (1107-8). This may simply be foreshadowing Christ's death on the cross, but the intimation of child mortality puts this odd episode into a different perspective. In Chapter 21 of *Desolation of a City*, Phythian-Adams analyzes the available data on the number of children in Coventry in 1523, concluding that there was an "existing paucity of children" (232) and that "what remained of Coventry's population in 1523 was already beginning to breed itself out of existence" (235). The population which had already been decimated by disease, famine, and emigration, was not producing enough children to replace itself, and Phythian-Adams suggests that the situation did not improve in the following decades (235-7). Moreover, the textile industries were particularly affected by these low replacement rates, both in terms of children and of servants, the latter of which could include apprentices. Among the textile crafts, 55.7% of households contained children, as opposed to 75% of merchant households (227-8), and 60.8% of households contained servants, as opposed to

90% of merchant households (208). Weavers in particular had a replacement ratio of 0.4 for servants, when "a ratio of between 0.8 and 0.9 . . . roughly indicates the danger level. Any score below this almost certainly reflects the decline of the occupation or category in question" (212). Phythian-Adams adds that "The perilously low replacement ratio of 0.4 recorded for the Weavers, for instance, undoubtedly betrays grim realities in this sector of the economy" (212), and he confirms a drop in the number of master weavers in the 1530s.

In this context, Mary and Joseph's protectiveness of their child and the Doctors' disappointment over their failure to gain him as an apprentice reflects a general anxiety over the paucity of children and the future populations of Coventry as a whole and Weavers in particular. This anxiety haunts the remainder of the pageant. For their part, Mary and Joseph seem overeager to return home. While Joseph announces the equivalent of "At Naza*re*the now I wolde we weyre" (1118) in all three of the York, Towneley, and Coventry analogues, only in Coventry does Mary concur: "Whereoff am I right fayne" (1121). The Coventry version adds further lines which increase the sense of urgency:

JOSOFFE. In this place whyle we ar here
　　Loke thatt we haue all owre gere
　　Thatt we cu*m* nott agayne.
MARE. Josoffe, husebonde, we myse nothing,
　　But at youre wyll let vs be gooyng
　　Asse fast ease eyu*er* we can. (1122-1127)

While these lines indicate practical actions, they also express a desire to leave as quickly as possible and to ensure that there is no reason to return, as if the holy family does not quite trust that the Doctors will let them leave with their son. In turn, the Doctors' closing speeches, while ostensibly celebrating their meeting with God's elect child, also suggest discomfiture with the reversal of their authority. The third Doctor's speech is revealing:

> Ys not thys a wondurs case,
> That þ*is* yonge chylde soche knolege hase?
> Now surely he hath asposschall g*r*ace,
> Soo hy dowtis dese*r*nyng,
> Thatt we wyche nobull doctors be,
> *And* gradudis gret of old antequete,
> And now on this place w*ith* yonge infance,
> Ageyne ar sett to larning. (1155-1162)

The eldest and wisest members of the community are returned to an educational infancy because the knowledge they had mastered no longer applies. At the same time, because there are no youth rising through the ranks to replace these Doctors, they must take on the roles of hierarchical infancy as well as their current offices. The gerontocratic system of which they are the masters crumbles with the departure of the child that would renew it. This sense of unease is further fueled when the first Doctor recommends they leave in order to avoid "more pe*r*ell" (1165), even though there is no obvious danger on the literal level of the story being enacted. The comment makes more sense, however, with respect to the desertion of those wealthier citizens who left the city to avoid both the financial burdens of civic office and the difficulties associated with economic crisis. The pageant ends with a further allusion to the civic context, as the first Doctor formally dismisses the audience:

> All owre matters reyjurned be,
> Tyll that a dey of argument
> Ma be apwyntyd indyfferentle,
> Where all you the come*n*alte,
> You ma dep*ar*te on this co*n*dyssion,
> Thatt ye atende at the next monyssion. (1174-80)

The Doctors may consider leaving the city, but the commoners are warned not to, and the references to a secular context again situate this episode in familiar civic territory.

Framed by these civic references and containing allusions to craft practices, the *Christ and the Doctors* episode takes on a double meaning in reference to both craft and civic gerontocratic structures. Jesus is both a potential apprentice and the "honest commoner" who might one day be eligible to take up civic office, so his removal from the system becomes a double threat. The ideals of gerontocracy established in the earlier two episodes of the pageant, with the prophets and Simeon, are disrupted by the absence of new members at the bottom of the hierarchy. While vaguely threatening and potentially preparing to desert the city, the older members of that hierarchy are depicted as being eager to pass on their knowledge and power, but are helpless and reduced to "infancy" when they have no one to pass these things onto. The pageant as a whole leaves the audience uncertain and mourning the loss of the gerontocratic system; they are forced to recognize the failure of their ability to achieve the ideal.

Intriguingly, this anxiety over the lack of children in Coventry and the pattern of depicting the gerontocratic ideal followed by its disruption occurs in the other pageant revised in 1535. The Shearmen and Taylors' pageant begins with the *Annunciation* and *Nativity*, including episodes with the *Shepherds* and the *Three Kings*, all of which naturally celebrate the birth of Jesus and the salvation he brings. The pageant ends, however, with a *Slaughter of the Innocents* episode, and this version of the story is markedly different from that of other cycle plays. In the York and Towneley plays, the knights commanded to kill all the male children in Bethlehem have no qualms about doing so. In the Chester version, the knights only resist initially because they think killing children is beneath them. Once they are assured that "the labor they are being asked to perform is suitable for their social standing" (Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance* 143), they participate eagerly. In Coventry, however, the knights resist for ethical and political reasons. When Herod asks them, "ys not this the best red / Thatt all yong chyldur fro this schuld be dede, / Wyth sworde to be slayne?" (731-3), the knights respond negatively:

> MYLES I. My lorde, Kyng Erode be name,
> Thy wordis agenst my wyll schal be.
> To see soo ma*ny* yong child*er* dy ys schame;
> Therefore consell þerto gettis þ*ou* non of me.
> MYLES II. Well seyd, fello, my trawth I plight.
> S*ir* kyng, p*er*seyve right well you may,
> Soo grett a mord*er* to see of yong frute
> Wyll make a rysyng in þi noone cuntrey. (738-45)

They warn Herod that the deed is both shameful and dangerous, since it will incite rebellion, but Herod refuses to listen, threatening the knights until they promise to do his bidding. Nonetheless, when they engage in the slaughter, they continue to express their reluctance by identifying Herod as the source of their actions. They "mvst fullfyll Erodis com*m*andement, / Elis be [they] asse trayturs *and* cast all in care" (791-2). Whereas the knights of other cycles make a mockery of chivalry by reveling in the slaughter, the knights in Coventry lament their actions and the suffering they have caused, "grettly reybukyng chewaldry" (818). They again emphasize the political ramifications of Herod's actions, fearing "moche wengance" (822) and predicting that Herod will "beyre the p*er*ell" (825). The pointlessness of this mass murder is brought home in the last lines of the pageant when the knights present Herod "W*ith* waynis and waggyns" (827) full of slaughtered children, in the face of which the herald tells Herod that Jesus has escaped to Egypt. Combined with the usual heart-wrenching lamentations of the women and the haunting melody of the familiar Coventry carol, the episode serves to contrast the joy of the one lucky, holy family with the despair of a bereaved population. The references to the political ramifications of Herod's actions help to situate this childlessness simultaneously in biblical and civic contexts, reinforcing the connection between the suffering women and the citizens of Coventry. As with the Weaver's pageant, the emphasis on the slaughter in a civic context reinforces anxieties about the failure of the gerontocratic system as a result of a failing population. In addition, this scene's representations of authority are either corrupt (Herod) or powerless against corruption (the knights), which poses a further threat to the audience's faith in gerontocratic authority.

Both pageants, then, look back to the ideal gerontocratic model. As in Chester, the celebration of the ideal becomes most central when it is threatened, as it was by both a decline in population and a growing instability of the civic elite's authority. Both pageants appear to acknowledge the failure of the gerontocratic model and to express anxiety over the need for a new system. Indeed, in 1535, the same year that Croo revised these two texts, the civic structure was irrevocably altered by the amalgamation of the two religious guilds so central to the gerontocratic nature of that structure. The Corpus Christi Guild held its last banquet in 1534 (Phythian-Adams, *Desolation* 269), and, on October 12, 1535, was annexed to the Trinity Guild by a vote of the Leet of twenty to four (*Leet* 722-3). The remaining guild lasted another ten years, until it, too, was suppressed in 1545 by the Act of Dissolution. The two extant pageants in Coventry, then, reflect an awareness that the current system had already begun to pass, and an uncertainty of what might replace it.

Conclusions

In Chester, the crafts and city had differing motivations for cycle production, but these motivations generally overlapped and complemented each other. In Coventry, however, the play appears to have been organized by crafts with established connections to sacred spaces, implying a primarily religious motivation to cycle production; it was only later, in a time of economic crisis, that Coventry's cycle was co-opted by the civic authorities as one means of soliciting royal patronage and shoring up the city's national status. A close reading of the orders which relate to cycle production highlights the negotiation of this shift in the play's cultural function. What had once been the purview of a limited elite of craft associations came to represent a more extensive civic identity and a larger range of urban labour. The extant texts also record an awareness of the crisis, revealing a shared anxiety about the failure of the administrative system and the implications of that failure for the stability of both craft and civic identities. Exploring the play in historical context, both diachronically and synchronically, shows a text which functioned as a response to a culture in crisis.

Chapter Four

Negotiating Craft Divisions in Newcastle

The northern city of Newcastle upon Tyne had "a population rising from an estimated four thousand in 1400 to ten thousand in 1560" (*REED: Newcastle* ix), and it became a county in its own right in the fifteenth century. While not a regional centre like York or Chester, it was a mustering ground for the king's armies during Anglo-Scottish conflicts, and the town was considered a significant point of defense within the English territories. In the early Middle Ages, Newcastle had witnessed and survived several invasions, including an eighteen year occupation by the Scots in the twelfth century (Hearnshaw 45). This involvement in the border wars resulted in the town's development as "the basis of an extensive and elaborate system of Border defence" (Hearnshaw 57). Truces and treaties were negotiated in the town, hostages and political prisoners were held there, and English armies were assembled and supplied with the help of its citizens. Relationships on the Anglo-Scottish border in the later Middle Ages were also characterized by "suspicious friendship and cordial enmity" (Hearnshaw 80). In 1513, for example, the army which was to oust the Scots in the Battle of Flodden Field was assembled at Newcastle (Hearnshaw 81), and 1524 saw Scottish raiders marauding within eight miles of the town (Pollard 171-2), yet the city also entertained Princess Margaret as she made her way into Scotland in 1503 to marry the Scottish king, James IV, and, it was hoped, to secure peace on the border (*REED: Newcastle* xix, Hearnshaw 80). As J. A. Tuck notes, while there were fewer incursions in the high and late Middle Ages, "the threat of invasion and destruction was ever present in men's minds" and "this psychological climate was, in the long run, perhaps more important than actual destruction" (41, 42). Certainly a continued distrust of the Scots is evident in Newcastle craft ordinances forbidding the apprenticeship of Scottish born boys (Hearnshaw 66).[125]

In this climate of ever-possible attack and disruption, the Newcastle Corpus Christi play represents the continuity of civic identity, a cultural product that stands out in counterpoint to the cycles of war and truce. As in Coventry, the records and textual fragments are sparse. J. F. Wade suggests that this is "probably . . . a result of a destruction of corporation muniments when the Scots occupied Newcastle in 1640" (3-4), although the antiquarian John Sykes also notes that a fire in 1639 consumed "the town clerk's office and part of the exchange . . . and several of the deeds and writings of the corporation were destroyed" (91). A. F. Butcher similarly blames the Scots for the paucity of material before 1500, ambiguously citing "the activities of the Scots during the civil war" (67).[126] The tendency to blame the Scots for the lack of records when other causes are evident demonstrates how even later scholars give priority to Anglo-Scottish tensions in the psychological landscape, regardless of the Scots' actual impact. "The Scotsman" serves as a ready-made villain, an Other against which Newcastle's identity has been conveniently defined. This becomes significant when considering the fragmentary remains of the cycle in historical context, an issue to which I will return at the end of this chapter.

If Novocastrian records in general are sparse, records informing a study of medieval drama are more so. *REED: Newcastle*'s extracts are primarily late copies of ordinances, and they by no means provide a complete register of crafts participating in the play. Most significantly, there is no indication of a Shipwrights' pageant, yet the only remaining pageant is "Noah's Ark; or, The Shipwrights Ancient Play, or Dirge" (Davis 19-31). According to the records that J. J. Anderson excerpts in the *REED: Newcastle* volume, there are possibly nineteen craft groupings producing twenty-four pageants. Settling on precise numbers is difficult, given that the records range in date from 1427 to 1581, and there is evidence that some crafts shifted their associations over time. The Bricklayers, for example, are described as producing two pageants in conjunction with the Plasterers in 1454, but by 1579, they had joined with the Slaters to produce a different pageant. The Merchant Adventurers paid ambiguously for "the playes" (*REED: Newcastle* 17) in 1519, and in 1554 organized the production of five pageants on behalf of the trading crafts, the Drapers, Mercers, Boothmen (corn traders), Vintners, and Hostmen (trade brokers, later coal traders). Only the first three of these crafts made up the Merchant Adventurers in the fifteenth century, however, and it is unlikely that the Merchant Adventurers regularly produced pageants in excess of the crafts that they represented, just as it is uncertain that the 1554 production arrangement was standard practice.[127]

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[125] See, for example, A. Hamilton Thompson (129), J. R. Boyle (399), and J. C. Hodgsen (1-2) for restrictions on the nationality of apprentices in the ordinances of the Glovers and Skinners, Goldsmiths, and Saddlers respectively.

[126] While Butcher's article focuses on the fifteenth century, he is probably referring to the civil wars of the seventeenth century, and not the War of the Roses.

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[127] The relationship of the various trading crafts to the Merchant Adventurers is unclear. While the Drapers, Mercers, and Boothmen were certainly members of the larger organization, the Hostmen, Spicers, and Vintners are never specifically identified as sub-groups of the Merchant Adventurers. There are several records which associate Hostmen with the Merchants, such as the 1518 ordinance which specifies that "no hostman . . . being free of the fellowship of merchants, should buy any manner of merchandise of his host" (Dendy xxix), and F. W. Dendy suggests that "the Hostmen of Newcastle appear at an early date to have formed an association of their own within the Merchant Gild" (Boyle and Dendy xxxii), but James Walker and M. A. Richardson insist emphatically that the "company of Merchant Adventurers, since its incorporation . . . has consisted of three branches, viz.:—The Drapers, . . . the Mercers, . . . and the Boothmen" (5). Part of the confusion is due to the Hostmen's eventual official incorporation in 1600 as a separate company with a monopoly on the trade of coal in Newcastle (Dendy xxxi-xxxiii). As Dendy suggests, being a Hostman was probably a specialization within the Merchant Adventurers that eventually developed into a separate trade. Spicers and Vintners are mentioned in association with the other trading crafts, so the same explanation may hold true for them as well.

Envisioning the shape of the cycle is even more difficult, given that many of the records indicate participation in the "Corpus christi play" (*REED: Newcastle* 3) without identifying a specific episode.[128] The following table summarizes the information on pageant ownership and identification which can be gleaned from the records.

Table 7: Chronological Listing of Newcastle Pageant Ownership[129]

Craft	Pageant, identified as	Source
Coopers (by 1427)		1427 Ordinary (1497 copy)
Smiths (by 1437)		1437 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Glovers (by 1437)		1437 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Skinners (by 1438)		1438 Ordinary
Barbers (by 1442)	The Baptising of Christ	1442 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Slaters (by 1452); and Bricklayers (by 1579)	The Offering of Issac by Abraham	1452 Slaters' Ordinary; 1579 Slaters and Bricklayers' Ordinary
Bricklayers and Plasterers (by 1454)	The Creation of Adam, The Flying of our Lady into Egypt	1454 Ordinary
Saddlers (by 1460)	Saviour's Sufferings	1460 Ordinary; 1533 Ordinary
Walkers (by 1477); Fullers and Dyers (by 1561)	possibly The Last Supper	1477 Walkers' Ordinary (1669 copy); Fullers and Dyers' Accounts (1561 entry)
Merchant Adventurers (by 1519); Drapers, Mercers, Boothmen, Vintners, and Hostmen (by 1552)	possibly Harrowing or Doomsday (Hostmen)	Book of Orders (1519 and 1552 entries)
Weavers (by 1525)	The Bearing of the Cross	1525 Ordinary
Tanners (by 1532)		1532 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Glaziers, and Painters (by 1536)	The Three Kings of Cologne	1536 Ordinary
Tailors (by 1537)		1537 Ordinary
Curriers, Feltmakers, and Armourers (by 1545)		1545 Ordinary
Cooks (by 1575)		1575 Ordinary (1668-9 copy)
Millers (by 1578)	The Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of the Thraldom Bondage and Servitude of King Pharaoh	1578 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Housecarpenters and Joiners (by 1579); Joiners (by 1589)	The Burial of Christ	Housecarpenters and Joiners 1579 Ordinary (1669 copy); 1589 Joiners' Ordinary
Masons (by 1581)	The Burial of Our Lady St. Mary the Virgin	1581 Ordinary (1669 copy)

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[128] As Anderson notes, "play" and "pageant" are used interchangeably in the Newcastle records. The Coopers' Ordinary, for example, states that the craft will "play ther play at ther costes" (*REED: Newcastle* 3). Only the context suggests that this is a smaller section of a larger play.

[129] I have compiled this table from the information provided by Anderson in his introduction (*REED: Newcastle* xii-xiii) and supplemented it with my reading of the records excerpted throughout the *REED: Newcastle* volume. See Appendix 3 for an annotated version of this table.

As this table demonstrates, initial references to pageant production are dispersed over a 150 year period, and there are few records which confirm a continuity of sponsorship. Moreover, this list of participants is certainly incomplete. Aside from the Shipwrights, Anderson identifies a further nineteen "Companies which certainly or probably existed in the sixteenth century or earlier, but which have no surviving ordinary for that period and no other record which makes mention of the Corpus Christi procession or play" (xiii), and there are still other occupations that may or may not have formed officially recognized crafts and produced pageants.[130]

Given the relative paucity of archival material, I begin this chapter with an analysis of an extra-civic document, a Star Chamber case which sheds light on inter-craft tensions in Newcastle during the early sixteenth century. I then turn to craft ordinances composed from 1427 to 1589, considering the play's cultural function as it is revealed in the language of these documents. In combination, these records create a context in which to read the surviving Newcastle pageant. This pageant highlights internal civic conflicts over craft boundaries but attempts to overcome these conflicts by drawing attention to a common, external enemy.

The 1516 Star Chamber Case: A Context of Conflict

Despite the difficulty of defining the shape of the play and the number of craft associations involved, it is still possible to identify some of the central tensions which occupied medieval Newcastle and to suggest the role that the Corpus Christi play had or was intended to have in mediating these tensions. As Anderson notes in his summary of Newcastle's history, the town was ruled by a guild merchant from the early thirteenth century, and this guild was "probably made up, at least originally, of all the burgesses" (x). Over time, however, civic authority came to rest in the hands of the city's trade associations, the Drapers, Mercers, and Boothmen, as opposed to artisanal associations. This status quo was challenged in 1342, when nine crafts successfully lobbied "in full gild" for inclusion in the civic government. F. W. Dendy takes "full gild" to be "distinct from the merchant gild, and another name for the whole body of the freemen" (Boyle and Dendy xxiii), but I believe that "full gild" meant the guild merchant, precisely because it was on the basis of their membership as freemen in the guild merchant that these crafts would have had the right to participate in the civic government. The 1342 agreement represents a compromise whereby the power of civic governance was formally distributed among a subsection of the guild merchant. The Skinners, Tailors, Saddlers, Bakers, Tanners, Cordwainers, Butchers, Smiths, and Fullers joined the three trade associations as the twelve mysteries which elected the mayor, alderman, and other civic officials (Boyle and Dendy xxiv, Hearnshaw 65).[131] Other trades which either were not strong enough to gain a place in the electoral process or which developed in the town after 1342 were still members of the guild merchant, that is, still freemen, but were excluded from the political system. Scholars generally identify these secondary crafts as by-trades.

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[130] The issue of how many crafts could have been involved in the play is complicated by the range of sources and terminology. Anderson identifies fifty-one crafts or craft groupings in Newcastle, compiling his information from antiquarian John Brand and the 1516 Star Chamber case, but he misses the Hostmen, and his list (following Brand) separates some crafts that are associated with respect to the play (listing, for example, the Goldsmiths separately from the Glaziers, Plumbers, Pewterers, and Painters). Moreover, since craft groupings shifted over time, it is not possible to say when each group existed and could have been involved in the play. Finally, there are several crafts listed in Anderson's overall survey which are not accounted for in his discussion of the pageants or his list of companies missing ordinaries.

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[131] Anderson adds Brewers to the Bakers and Dyers to the Fullers in his list of the twelve mysteries. Possibly this is how they are listed in Brand's notes, which Anderson cites later, although it is also true that the Fullers and Dyers were associated in the sixteenth century. There is, however, no such association evident for the Bakers and Brewers.

The idea that civic freedom was equivalent to membership in the ancient guild merchant, along with the lingering political nature of that membership, provided the basis for a potentially explosive situation in the early sixteenth century. In 1515 the Mayor, Aldermen, and "certayne [of] the honest Comyners" brought a case (called the 1516 Star Chamber case, based on the date of the verdict) to the Star Chamber against the "Artificers Burgenses and Guild-marchauntis" of the town (Leadam 75, 78).[132] According to the plaintiffs, the defendants had been poaching on the rights of the trading crafts, the Drapers, Boothmen, and Mercers in particular, by engaging in wholesale and retail trade without the permission of these trading associations. The craftsmen, they argued, "vsurpe and clayme to buye and sell all maner wares marchaundise and oder thynges within the same Towne at their libertie aswell perteynyng to oder craftis and misteries as to their owne without any agreement contrarie" (Leadam 76). The city authorities had allegedly asked the craftsmen to cease this practice until such time as the matter could be considered by the justices of the peace. The complaint to the king claimed that not only did the defendants refuse to desist, but they also formed an illegal assembly, agreed among themselves to maintain their practices in defiance of the civic authorities, and threatened the mayor and his fellows. The defendants, of course, denied that they had made any such threats, claiming instead that they were set upon when they came to the council seeking justice in maintaining their ancient right to trade freely as members of the civic guild merchant.

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[132] The Star Chamber court was a court of criminal jurisdiction which grew out of the King's Council ("Star-chamber," def. 2a). It served as a higher authority over other regional and national courts and had the power to bring members of the aristocracy to trial.

On the surface, this was a case concerned with definitions of craft boundaries. The merchant trades wanted their crafts recognized and protected just as other crafts were, while the craftsmen wanted their rights as freemen of the guild merchant upheld. The questions put to the witnesses privileged the first perspective, foreshadowing the outcome of the case, but the evidence provided by witnesses on both sides supported each party's perspective of the terminology involved. The first article put forward by the examiners was whether a burgess might occupy a mystery or craft other than his own without permission of that craft; both the civic authorities and the craftsmen agreed that a freeman should only practice his own craft and not infringe on the practices of others. The city reinforced the sense that the issue was one of craft boundaries by providing witnesses who had made agreements with other crafts to practice additional trades, even when these agreements did not involve merchant crafts. The city presented seventy-seven witnesses in total, fifteen of whom practiced a second or third trade (see Appendix 4, Table A). Of these fifteen, seven were craftsmen who entered into agreements with trading companies, while six were craftsmen who made agreements to practice other artisanal crafts.[133] As a choice of witnesses, these last six in particular represent a sly move on the city's part, since the defendants would have been the first to agree that no man could practice one of their crafts without permission. The craftsmen's witnesses, however, attest to a different issue entirely. Of the seventy-two men presented (as or by witnesses), none identified as practicing a second artisanal craft, but sixty-four identified as engaging in trade in addition to their craft work (see Appendix 4, Table B). The witnesses not only attested to their own practices, but also to the practices of their past masters and parents, adding weight to their claim that such side-line trading was an historical right of all freemen. Because both parties had agreed to the basic principle of craft protection, however, the verdict in this issue was decided in the city's—and trade associations'—favour: no one could practice a second craft, including trading, without permission from that craft.

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[133] Two of these fifteen witnesses do not identify their original trade.

The details of the verdict, however, demonstrate that the issues in the case went beyond the defense of craft monopolies. First, the court delineated a group of twenty-six crafts whose members could not join a second craft without renouncing membership in their original craft. The rationale for these exclusions is unclear. Many of the crafts named were poorer manufacturing and unskilled labour associations, such as Fletchers, Daubers, and Porters, but others were members of the civic electorate and presumably more respectable. Still others had a general history of being repressed or contained because of potential monopolies or other negative associations: the Butchers, for example, who supplied the town not only with meat but also with skins and tallow, and who were symbolically tainted as a blood-trade, were included in the list of restricted crafts.[134] At the same time, several manufacturing crafts, such as the Skinners, Bakers, and Tailors, were not listed among the excluded crafts.

Beyond this exclusionary list, the court also established a financial criterion: no man was to be admitted to a second craft, trading or otherwise, unless he was worth at least £10. The ruling goes on to specify the fines for entrance to a second craft based on the craftsman's worth and to describe how this worth will be determined. Then, given the apparent matter of the case, the ruling takes a strange turn: it reiterates the procedure for civic elections, confirming the role of the twelve mysteries to make up the electorate and provide civic auditors. The ruling also confirms a necessary residence of one year in the town before taking up the freedom, and affirms a restriction preventing liveried servants from becoming freemen.

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[134] Jaques Le Goff mentions butchers' negative association with bloodshed when he discusses labour taboos in *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (58-70).

This shift in focus reveals what is really at stake in the case and explains why the civic authorities took sides in what initially appears to be a craft dispute. Membership in the right crafts meant access to civic authority. While the desire of the trading crafts to consolidate and protect their monopoly was certainly at issue, the definition of craftsmen as guild merchants and their insistence on the right to trade based on this definition provided a potential standpoint from which to challenge the civic structure. As members of the guild merchant or as citizens engaged in trading (and therefore nominally belonging to the trading crafts) the craftsmen were in a position to demand representation in the electoral process and, arguably, to take up civic offices.[135] It is quite possible that these issues only came to light during the course of the investigation, but the court's verdict shows a determination to prevent further disruption by both reiterating the civic structure and limiting those who could participate in it on the basis of income and craft association. In other words, while there is no one explanation as to why the men of certain crafts were restricted from practicing more than one trade, the effect of the ruling was to prevent certain craftsmen from entering the electoral system. A butcher who was worth at least £10 could renounce his trade and join one of the electoral mysteries, but he could not participate in the civic structure as a butcher.

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[135] Other scholars have suggested that the 1516 case represented a struggle "for recognition and for power" (Hearnshaw 65, but see also Boyle and Dendy xxix-xxx), but they do not explain how a dispute over trading rights translates into a political bid for power.

This case demonstrates two things: first, that the discourse of identity, most specifically in relation to definitions of craft and civic boundaries, was a disputed issue and had a significant impact on the maintenance of order in the town. Since these issues had ostensibly been settled back in 1342, such a severe outbreak of tensions nearly 200 years later suggests that these troubles had been brewing for a long time. In fact, as both the examiners of the Star Chamber case and the Merchant Adventurers' records attest, a significant number of legal battles between merchants and craftsmen proceeded and foreshadowed the outbreak of tensions in 1515, testifying to the growth of these tensions over time (Leadam 91; Boyle and Dendy xxx, 81-2). Second, underlying the debate over rights and definitions was a dispute over political power, over the right to access and influence the course of government. The 1516 ruling reaffirmed the existing balance of power, officially limiting the means and criteria by which individual citizens could change their status via craft associations and thereby participate in the machinery of government.

Novocastrian Ordinaries: A Bid for Order

Beyond the specific eruption of tensions represented by the 1516 Star Chamber case, Newcastle's craft ordinances also attest to the need for a clear delineation of crafts and suggest that the dispute over definitions had long been part of the city's history. The language of these craft documents reveals a concern with overcoming dissent and establishing civic unity, issues that the ordinance preambles associate with the clear categorization of craft identity. As the following discussion demonstrates, the ordinances also imagine participation in the play as a potential corrective for discord both between crafts and within them. The preambles of these documents imply that the civic authorities saw play sponsorship as a means of creating civic order and unity without altering the underlying political structure. In other words, as a civic activity, the play enacted a symbolic inclusiveness meant to sublimate the fundamental inequality of the existing power structure while simultaneously confirming the boundaries and hierarchical position of the performing crafts.[136] These ordinances demonstrate the role of the play in the city's attempts to negotiate tensions and to enact both order and unity without redistributing power.

Craft ordinances (called ordinaries in Newcastle) were the craft rules officially registered with and sanctioned by the civic body. A national statute passed in 1436 required that all crafts register their ordinances with their civic authorities (Hearnshaw 66), and several towns ordered crafts to bring their ordinances to the council, forbidding the creation of unregistered craft rules. In Coventry, for example, a 1421 Leet order requires "þat no man of any Crafte w*ith*in this Cite mak Caue ne oth*ur* ordyna*u*nce among hem but hit be ouerseen be the maio*ur* & his cownsell" (*Leet* 29), and another order of 1475 confirms that ordinances were to be "affermed" (418) by the council. The wording of these orders implies that crafts generally constructed their own ordinances and then brought them to the civic authorities for approval, but the nature of the Newcastle ordinaries suggests a more centralized process. These ordinaries are instead "ordinet And Assentid by the mare, sheriff, Aldermen Justice of peas by Auctorite of the co*m*myn Gilde of the seide towne" (*REED: Newcastle* 3), implying that the civic authorities, not the crafts, created and were responsible for the wording of these documents. Moreover, while ordinances are often formulaic, the formulae of the Newcastle ordinaries follow chronologically distinct patterns, suggesting the presence of a centrally controlled and periodically revised exemplar. Anderson alludes to but does not quite recognize these patterns when he notes that several ordinaries use similar formulaic phrases and that two ordinaries "are closely similar in wording" (xiv). In fact, the opening preambles of ordinaries between 1427-77 and 1532-37 respectively reflect the existence of two related exemplars, and the *REED: Newcastle* volume excerpts of ordinaries between 1579 and 1589, while not including the preamble, similarly suggest an exemplar. Both the implied presence of a centrally controlled exemplar and the civic authorities' claim to responsibility for the ordinaries characterize these documents as representations of civic expectations for both craft organization and play production. As the dates above imply, there are at least three separate, although related, exemplars suggested by the formulae in these ordinaries.[137] In what follows, I will review these three exemplars in detail and then discuss their implications with respect to the cultural function of the Newcastle play.

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[136] This interpretation of the Newcastle play's function echoes Heather Swanson's and Sarah Beckwith's discussions of the York play as a tool of power that divided the labouring population and reinforced the authority of the civic elite. See in particular Swanson's, "The Illusion of Economic Structure," and Beckwith's third chapter in *Signifying God*, "Work, Markets, Civic Structure: Organizing the York Corpus Christi Plays" (42-55). In the current portion of my argument, I focus on the surviving ordinances in order to reveal the city's changing expectations for the play, but I will discuss the problems with reading cycle production solely as an expression of oligarchic power in the next chapter.

The first exemplar, used between 1427 and 1477, includes a short preamble that justifies the rules to follow as a means of worshipping God, maintaining the procession and play, and settling dissension among the crafts. The earliest ordinary, that of the Coopers' in 1427, begins,

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[137] I have distinguished these three exemplars based on the material available in the *REED: Newcastle* volume, but more work needs to be done in the archives to determine the regularity of and connection between these exemplars. An analysis of this sample, for example, cannot consider ordinaries which do not reference the cycle.

> To the Worshippe of godde And sustentacion of the procession And Corpus chr*ist*i play in the towne of the Neucastell vppon Tyne Aftur the laudable And the amycient Custome of the seide towne And in eschewyng of discencion And discorde that has benne emong diuerse Craft*es*. of the seid towne is ordinet . . . . (*REED: Newcastle* 3)

The first order which follows the preamble instructs the Coopers to "go to gedder in procession as other Craftes Doyes And play ther play at ther costes" (*REED: Newcastle* 3). Most variations of this preamble and subsequent order are minor. The 1437 Smiths' Ordinary, for example, substitutes "old Custome" for "amycient Custome" and "disorder" for "discorde" (*REED: Newcastle* 4). It also emphasizes that the craft will go in the procession "in their place and order to them̃ by the said Cominality Assigned" and stresses that they will fund the play "att ther owne Costs" (*REED: Newcastle* 4), but the fundamental arrangement of the first order remains the same. The only ordinary which does not contain this order is the 1477 Walkers' Ordinary, and other variations in the preamble in this ordinary, discussed below, signal a shift in the use of the exemplar. Two ordinaries, the Glovers' Ordinary of 1437 and potentially the Skinners' Ordinary of 1438, present a reduced version of the preamble, removing the statement about dissension and discord, but otherwise following the model set out in the Coopers' Ordinary.[138] One reason for the close correspondence between the ordinaries of this period may be that four of the seven ordinaries are copies entered into the city's enrollment books in 1669.

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[138] Anderson excerpts an eighteenth-century transcript of the Skinners' Ordinary from John Brand's notes (*REED: Newcastle* 5). It appears that Brand transcribed only the first line of the formula, perhaps because he recognized that it was a formula. His transcription matches the reduced preamble found in the Glovers' Ordinary, but the preamble may have continued in the original.

The inclusion of some key variations in the later ordinaries based on this exemplar, however, suggests that the copyist respected the differences in his source documents.

The second exemplar expands the first and places increased emphasis on the role of these ordinaries in maintaining civic order. Four ordinaries from 1532-1537 present this version of the preamble. The first of these ordinaries, the Tanners', begins,

> Vnto the honour worshipp lawde and p*rai*sing of Almighty God & sustentac*i*on & maintenance of the procession of Corpus chr*isti* & the play of the same with in the Towne of Newcastle vpon Tine according to the laudible vse & ancient custome of the same Towne of Newcastle & in eschewing of diuerse great dissenc*i*ons debates Striues & discords that heretofore hath been moued & depending amongst diuerse Crafts of the said Towne of Newcastle for lack of good order . . ., tendering com*m*on wealth of this Towne & in auoydeing of such Inquietnesses debates Strifes & discordes & that good vnitye peace Loue & charity from henceforth may daily encrease & continue among the said Crafts to the pleasure of god & their com*m*on wealth. It is . . . ordeined . . . . (*REED: Newcastle* 17-18).

Again, the first order addresses attendance in the procession and then requires "imediately after the said procession done. Their pagions accustomed to them and belonging to be sett forth in due order & to be played together att all their Costs & charges" (*REED: Newcastle* 18). While variations between the four preambles and orders from this period are more numerous and substantive than in those following the first exemplar, these ordinaries generally maintain the same syntactic patterns. The 1533 Saddler's Ordinary, for example, replaces "Inquietnesses" with "Ing*re*etnesses," removes the word "Strifes," and replaces "peace" with "concorde" (*REED: Newcastle* 19), but otherwise follows the Tanners' Ordinary. The 1536 Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Glaziers, and Painters' Ordinary presents the most condensed version of this preamble, replacing, for example, the phrase "tendering com*m*on wealth of this Towne & in auoydeing of such Inquietnesses debates Strifes & discords" with the "ffor the good Reformac*i*on therof" (*REED: Newcastle* 20), in reference to the discord among crafts. The 1537 Tailors' Ordinary, on the other hand, expands on the nature of the discord, naming "man Slawghter & morder And other myscheves" (*REED: Newcastle* 21). The Tailors' Ordinary also moves the order describing the procession and play further down in the ordinary, after orders about the fees supporting the craft's light and pageant. Despite these variations, the preambles of these ordinaries remain similar enough to each other and divergent enough from the first set of ordinaries to imply a revised exemplar.

This second exemplar was abandoned in or by 1545, the same year that Henry VIII's Act of Parliament dissolved all religious associations (the Dissolution of the Colleges Act). After this point, the play is no longer mentioned in the preambles, although it is maintained within the orders. This alteration of the standard formula was probably an act of political expediency: if the ordinaries were seen to justify a religious production held on the date of a religious festival, then the craft associations themselves could be considered primarily religious in nature, and would be vulnerable to the 1545 Act. The three ordinaries composed between 1545 and 1578 that are excerpted in *REED: Newcastle* do not follow any recognizable pattern in their references to the play, but a new exemplar is evident behind the four ordinaries composed between 1579 and 1589.[139]

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[139] I was able to conduct a preliminary exploration of Newcastle ordinaries held by the Tyne and Wear Archive Services in July, 2006. While I was not able to examine the 1545 Curriers, Feltmakers, and Armourers' Ordinary, I did find that other ordinaries after 1545 follow a consistent formula in their preambles, suggesting that the city devised a new exemplar in response to the Dissolution of the Colleges

The first of these, the Houscarpenters and Joiners' Ordinary, asserts that "whensoeuer the generall plaies of this towne Called anciently the Corpus Christi plaies shall be played," the craft will

> decentlie and comlie assemble themselues together and att the charges of the said fellowship shall in the best manner they can sett forth to be plaid among other plaies of the said Towne the play called the offering of Isaak by Abraham . . . .
> (*REED: Newcastle* 63)

With the exception of naming different pageants, the 1579 Slaters and Bricklayers' Ordinary and the 1581 Masons' Ordinary follow this phrasing closely. The Masons' Ordinary embellishes slightly, saying, for example, that the "fellowship *and occupation*" will present the play "in the best manner *and wise* they can" (*REED: Newcastle* 71, italics mine), but the structure of the order is very close to the two from 1579. The most significant variation occurs in the 1589 Joiners' Ordinary, which replaces the reference to the Corpus Christi play with "any generall playe or Marshall exercise" (*REED: Newcastle* 72); again, the general formula is maintained, implying a central exemplar for these four ordinaries.

The following table summarizes the shifts between exemplars:

Act. It is not until 1579, however, that the exemplar provides a consistent formula for orders relating to the cycle.

Table 8: Chronological Consideration of Newcastle Ordinances[140]

Date	Ordinary	Exemplar
1427	Coopers' Ordinary (1497 copy)	1
1437	Smiths' Ordinary (1669 copy)	1
1437	Glovers' Ordinary (1669 copy)	1
1438	Skinners' Ordinary	1
1442	Barbers' Ordinary (1669 copy)	1
1460	Saddlers' Ordinary	1
1477	Walkers' Ordinary (1669 copy)	1
1532	Tanners' Ordinary (1669 copy)	2
1533	Saddlers' Ordinary	2
1536	Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Glaziers, and Painters' Ordinary	2
1537	Tailors' Ordinary	2
1545	Curriers, Feltmakers, and Armourers' Ordinary	
1575	Cooks' Ordinary (1668-9 copy)	
1578	Millers' Ordinary (1669 copy)	
1579	Housecarpenters and Joiners' Ordinary (1669 copy)	3
1579	Slaters and Bricklayers' Ordinary	3
1581	Mason's Ordinary (1669 copy)	3
1589	Joiners' Ordinary	3

The recognition of exemplars behind these ordinaries highlights the significance of variation within ordinaries following the same exemplar. While the substitution of synonyms is to be expected, minor deviations from the standard pattern emphasize particular aspects of the exemplar and reflect shifting cultural contexts. Similarly, significant revisions or shifts between exemplars reflect changes in the council's concerns and their expectations for the play. Moreover, the presence of exemplars confirms that the form and content of Newcastle ordinaries was dictated by the civic authorities rather than by the individual crafts. As such, the ordinaries represent civic intentions and expectations, not necessarily artisanal ones, an important distinction with respect to the role assigned to the play in these ordinaries.

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[140] I have compiled this table from the records excerpted throughout the *REED: Newcastle* volume. *REED: Newcastle* provides twenty-one ordinaries recorded in Newcastle between 1427 and 1581 which mention craft participation in the cycle. Three of these—the 1452 Slaters' Ordinary, 1454 Bricklayers and Plasterers' Ordinary, and 1525 Weavers' Ordinary—are transcribed by antiquarians in summary only, and, as such, must be excluded from consideration.

Both the first and second exemplars suggest a significant connection between participation in the play and the maintenance of civic order. The syntactic structure of the first version of the preamble establishes two main functions or motivations for the orders that follow: "To the Worshippe of godde And sustentacion of the procession And Corpus chr*ist*i play" and "in eschewyng of discencion And discorde that has benne emong diuerse Craft*es*." The prepositions "To" and "in" that begin each phrase place these two motivations on the same level with respect to the orders, and encourage an appositional reading of the worship of God with the continuation of the procession and play. Maintaining the procession and play becomes a means of worshipping God. While the relationship between these two main purposes, serving God, the procession, and the play on one hand, and addressing craft conflicts on the other, is not causal, there is an implication that maintaining the play is similarly linked to the "eschewyng of discencion And discorde" (*REED: Newcastle* 3). More significantly, since participation in the procession and play generally occupy the first order(s) after the preamble, these activities are invested with the ability to correct dissension, or at the very least to provide an opportunity to do so. As such, the successful production of the play both represents the presence of order and becomes the means by which order is achieved.

While positing the procession and play as a corrective to discord and disorder may have been wishful thinking, a slight alteration in the formula suggests the reasoning behind this expectation. From 1437 on, the ordinaries based on the first exemplar specify that participants will attend the procession and play wearing livery. The ordinaries of the second exemplar also specify livery or "Array & apparel" (*REED: Newcastle* 18). This suggests that part of the significance of craft members' participation in these civic ceremonials is in a physical and demonstrative association with their trade. In the same vein, members who fail to attend, or who fail to wear their livery, are to be fined. Each craftsman's required presence in the procession and play represents an act of association, a physical choice and acknowledgement of identity based on the connection to a particular craft. Those who refuse to choose or to represent their identity are penalized. This demonstration of identity serves two purposes: it acts as an acknowledgement of craft boundaries and membership, and it visually separates members of the community, clarifying who had the right to practice a given trade, and who, distinctly, did not. The city expected the procession and play to enact order specifically by delineating craft boundaries.

Given the relative stability of the first exemplar over a fifty year period, the continued characterization of dissension and discord as something of the recent past speaks to a constant challenge to the authority and effectiveness of these ordinances to enact the order they seek, as well as to the city's continued efforts to achieve that order. Both the 1442 Barbers' Ordinary and the 1460 Saddler' Ordinary draw attention to the temporality inherent in this preamble when they alter the exemplar yet again to define the dissension and discord as that which ". . . now late hath been" (*REED: Newcastle* 5, 6). While *REED: Newcastle* does not excerpt records that reveal the nature of this discord, the continued use of this formulaic preamble represents an historical struggle to maintain order, a struggle which positions the play as both means and end.

It is not until 1477 that there is a hint of the kind of disorder that the ordinances and play are meant to quell. The 1477 Walkers' Ordinary emphasizes disorder *within* the fellowship, not simply *among* crafts. The preamble provides the second motivation for the ordinary as "the auoydeing and suppressing as well of dissention & discord in the ffellowshipp of the Craft of Walkers of the said Towne as of deceipt in working in the same Craft . . ." (*REED: Newcastle* 7). The implication is that at least part of the disruption between crafts was related to the clarity of practices within crafts. "Deceit" in this case could mean dishonest practices within the craft, but it could also refer to blurred boundaries with respect to craft practices and the people permitted to undertake them, a situation foreshadowing the outbreak of hostilities in 1515 and recorded by the Star Chamber case.

The altered preamble in the 1477 ordinary also signals a growing dissatisfaction with the language of the exemplar and its success in enacting clear craft divisions which would quell dissension between the crafts and encourage order in the city. Certainly these issues came to a head in 1515, and the resultant Star Chamber case provides a motivation for the revisions resulting in the second exemplar. The four ordinaries from 1532-1537 give more weight to the discord that craft rules are meant to prevent, and the language of the preamble specifically invokes a legal context for these disputes. Dissension and discord (or disorder) becomes "diuerse great dissenc*i*ons debates Striues & discords" that have been "moued & depending amongst diuerse Crafts of the said Towne of Newcastle for lack of good order" (*REED: Newcastle* 18). Anderson defines "moued" as "brought to court" (183) and "depending" as "awaiting settlement" (180); this language hearkens back to the Star Chamber case and the instigating lawsuits between merchants and craftsmen. The increased emphasis on the need and ability of the play to combat discord also reflects the reaffirmed and solidified craft boundaries established in the verdict of the case. The ruling made it even more important to be able to distinguish those craftsmen who had a right to participate in the civic government from those who did not on the basis of craft association.

The second version of the preamble also raises the ideal of commonwealth, effectively associating commonwealth with the absence of strife and the presence of unity. While the first set of ordinances focused only on establishing order, the second set places equal priority on fostering unity. The play, then, is not simply the means and ends of order within the town, but more importantly of civic unity. Presumably this unity would be achieved in the combined efforts and presence of the craftsmen in the procession and play, even as their attendance continued to emphasize the boundaries and hierarchical distinctions which maintained order. This is precisely the myth of the social miracle which Mervyn James and Charles Phythian-Adams posit as the result of Corpus Christi processions and plays, but it is equally the vision of the civic authorities who controlled the exemplars.[141] It did not necessarily represent the perspective of all crafts at all times.

As noted above, ordinaries after 1545 removed references to the play from the preamble, probably as a protective move in response to the Dissolution of the Colleges Act. By reducing the play to simply another task among many associated with craft practices and not a major motivation of those practices, the new ordinaries both protected the play and undermined its civic importance. While the 1545 Curriers, Feltmakers, and

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[141] See James, "Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town" and Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen." In *Signifying God*, Sarah Beckwith warns that "the subtle and dynamic complexity of James's article is [sometimes] reduced in its reproduction" (201 n 8), and I have certainly over-simplified both James's and Phythian-Adams's arguments here, but she also argues that James's theory "reiterate[s] the very clerical approach it seeks to lay bare" (25)—that is, his understanding of how Corpus Christi rituals function reflects hegemonic intentions rather than the range of possible responses and appropriations. Beckwith adds that James's "model of ritual derives from a holistic version of culture that cannot separate out or identify sociopolitical structures" (25), and she suggests that Phythian-Adams's arguments in "Ceremony and the Citizen" exhibit a similar limitation (201 n 9).

Armourers' Ordinary maintained the play in the first group of orders, the ordinaries of 1575 and 1578 moved the order further down in the document. The REED excerpts of these orders begin "And alsoe" (*REED: Newcastle* 58, 62), suggesting that craft participation in the play is no longer the most significant aspect of these ordinaries. The year 1575 also heralds the first appearance of the word "whensoeuer" in relation to the frequency of performance.[142] By the time that the third exemplar was in place, the play was no longer being performed regularly, and there is no sense from the orders in question that the play's performance was invested with the ability to enact order or unity. The emphasis of these remaining orders is on decent and "comlie" assembly and on ensuring that the crafts produced their pageants "in the best manner." The *Middle English Dictionary* defines "comlie" as "proper," echoing the earlier concern with order, but also as "splendid" ("Comli," defs. 3a and 1b), signaling the shift to an interest in aesthetic quality rather than civic unity.

In the fifteenth century, the ordinaries stress the role of the play in overcoming discord between and within crafts. In the first half of the sixteenth century, particularly in the 1530s, emphasis on the play as a means of overcoming strife and uniting the city increases, and the language hints specifically at legal battles, echoing the 1516 Star Chamber case. By the latter half of the sixteenth century, however, emphasis on the play decreases. It is no longer the main point of the ordinaries, but becomes one order among many, and the focus of the order is to ensure that the fellowship provides a respectable show. There is no longer any sense that the play can or needs to enact civic order or unity.

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[142] The Chamberlains' Accounts, Slaters' Accounts, and a Durham court case (*REED: Newcastle* 55, 57-8) all confirm a performance of the play in 1568, possibly the day after Corpus Christi (*REED: Newcastle* 174), but that is the last known performance of the play.

The removal of the play from the preamble suggests that Reformation had a role in reducing the impact of the play in the city, but England's religious transformations did not directly censure cycle production in Newcastle. The radical Protestant reformer John Knox served in Newcastle for two years, between 1550 and 1552 (Hearnshaw 83), where he advocated against the lingering influence of Catholicism in communion and prayer (Robson 3-4), and other Presbyterian preachers and lecturers followed. Despite Newcastle's increasingly Protestant atmosphere, the play was performed at least as late as 1568, suggesting that the reformers did not object to the cycle's continued production. More significant was probably the general decline of the crafts' authority. F. J. C. Hearnshaw argues that, by the 1600s, the crafts "had become little more than means through which the State regulated industry" (65), which suggests that they posed less of a threat to civic order and unity. As well, the city exhibited an increasingly stable English and Protestant civic identity as established in opposition to Scottish and Catholic Others. In 1569, Catholics in northern England attempted to stage an uprising in support of Mary, Queen of Scots, but Newcastle held with Elizabeth (Hearnshaw 84), demonstrating a stronger sense of civic identity and unity than the town had shown in 1515. Under these circumstances, the play had little purpose beyond aesthetic entertainment, and neither the financial nor cultural climate were amenable to its continuation.

The Play: Order, Unity, and the Other

Reexamining Newcastle's remaining pageant, "Noah's Ark; Or the Shipwrights' Ancient Play or Dirge," in light of the town's experience of conflict both externally, with the Scots, and internally, among the crafts, reveals thematic unities in the text and helps to explain at least one of the more obscure references. As many scholars have noted, the pageant is problematic. Norman Davis describes the extant text as "sadly battered" (xliii) and states that "the existing copy has obviously been not only modernized in language but gravely corrupted so that parts of it yield neither metre nor sense" (xl). Davis's amended version clarifies some problems by providing "northern dialectical forms which restore rhymes" (xlii), but few scholars have been willing to risk analyzing the text in depth.[143] A. C. Cawley provides the most recent consideration, and he takes direct aim at scholarship which dismisses the play as undramatic or disunified. In particular, he criticizes interpretations which see the Deabolus and Uxor (devil and wife) sections as "comic effect" (141), "an excrescence," and "almost entirely irrelevant" (qtd. 150). He acknowledges that the play is "short and imperfect" (150), but stresses that "The basic weakness of the play . . . is that the secrecy motif . . . is badly handled by the playwright or his reviser" (151). Cawley devotes much of his article to this secrecy motif, developing Anna Jean Mill's earlier recognition that the pageant is based on a different version of the Noah story than that which other English cycle plays use. In Chester, for example, Noah works on the ship with his family, making the act of ship-building and its attendant salvation a communal one. The Newcastle pageant, however, is based on a version of the story in which Noah's work must be kept secret, and the silence of Noah's tools is dependent on his obedience to this need for secrecy. Once Noah is tricked (with the help of the devil's drink) into telling his wife about the project, he must seek forgiveness for his disobedience and his subsequent work is no longer disguised from those around him. As Cawley points out, the problems with the Newcastle Noah pageant are not in the Uxor sections, but in the absence of the secrecy motif at the beginning when Noah receives God's commands. Cawley is uncomfortable about saying more, however, noting that "This is as far as, or perhaps further than, one should go in analyzing an incomplete dramatic action" (151).[144] Nonetheless, given some sense of historical context, one can indeed go further.

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[143] For the sake of clarity, I will use Davis's amended version of the text (25-31). All references to the text are by line number.

The pageant as it stands depicts God's frustration with humanity and his decision to destroy all but Noah and his family in the flood.[145] He sends his angel to tell the sleeping Noah to build a ship and fill it with animals and provisions. God also acknowledges that Noah is "not a wright" (21), but promises to give him "wit at will" (23). The angel awakens a grumpy Noah from his nap, describes the boat he is to build, warns him of the ensuing flood and his family's unique preservation, and concludes by repeating the command to stock the ship with animals and provisions. Noah in turn complains that he is too old and does not know how to build a boat, prays to Christ for aid, laments humanity's sin with direct reference to the audience, and then begins his work.

At this point, the devil enters the stage celebrating his general triumph over humanity. He is, however, troubled about a ship of which he has heard that is to save Noah's family, and he determines to visit his clever friend, Noah's wife, in order to

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[144] Cawley specifies that the action is incomplete only in so much as "it was probably only the first of two Noah plays" (151). Davis, too, is careful to acknowledge that the pageant in itself is relatively complete. The rhyme scheme suggests that there may be three lines missing in the angel's commands to Noah, but the action of the pageant itself is sufficient for a single episode in a cycle.

[145] Cawley points out that God only intends to "save Noah, his children and their wives—Uxor is not mentioned" (150). However, Noah assumes Uxor's salvation by his side (170), so we should not make too much of her apparent absence earlier.

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"taynt" (108) the family. Uxor greets the devil politely and asks his name, revealing that the attribution "friend" is conventional, a matter of social politeness, not a reflection of actual experience. The devil, however, refuses to share his name and changes the subject, warning Uxor that, if she follows her husband's current plans, she and her children will soon die. Ironically, Uxor names her interlocutor, calling him a "devil" (122) for saying such things. The devil assures her he is telling the truth and gives her a drink to give to Noah which will make the patriarch unable to keep his secrets. The devil then departs, promising to be with Uxor when she goes to the ship.

Noah, tired from his labour, goes home to rest, and Uxor greets him warmly with food and the devil's drink. Noah immediately exclaims that he has nearly lost his wits, and Uxor demands the truth of where he has been, swearing that they will not be friends unless he tells her. Noah bitterly reveals the story of the flood, ship, and their survival, noting that he would have told her before, if she were able to keep secrets. Uxor responds with incredulity: she curses the person that made Noah a wright, implying that Noah has no such skill, and then notes that, if he were really working on such a task, everyone would have heard the noise of his labour. Noah assures her that he tells the truth and indicates his intention to go out and finish his work. This provokes an angry response from Uxor, who curses Noah to the Devil. Noah then prays to God for assistance. The angel reappears and assures Noah that he can keep working despite having told his wife the secret. The angel does add, however, that the consequence of Noah's revelation to Uxor is that people will now be able to hear him working (evoking the secrecy motif). Once Noah has finished building the ship, he heads home to gather his family, including presumably his wife, and blessing the audience on the way. The play ends with a final parting curse from the devil.

Resonances with craft disputes are immediately apparent. God, Noah, and Uxor all draw explicit attention to the fact that Noah is not a wright (21, 82, 172). Despite Noah's claim that he has no knowledge of the craft in question, the play is full of references to ship-craft terminology. God promises to give Noah "wit" of "Pitch, tar, seam, and rowe" (23, 26), and the angel instructs Noah to build the ship "Of true timber highly railed / With thirty cubits in defence" (51-2). The angel adds,

> Look that she draw when she is drest.
> And in her side a door thou shear,
> With fenesters full fitly fest;
> And make chambers both less and mair
> For a flood that up shall brest. (54-8)

These lines describe a fairly generic structure, but other references are more specific.[146] Noah complains, "I was never in my life / Of kind or craft to burthen a boat" (81-2), but he reveals a basic knowledge of the supplies required, adding: "For I have neither ruff nor ryff, / Spyer, sprund, sprout, nor sprot" (83-4). The supplies that Noah is lacking are mostly types of wood, the stock in trade for a shipwright: "spyer" (or "spire") and "sprund" both refer to larger beams and poles, while "sprouts" and "sprots" are shoots and twigs, perhaps a hyperbolic indication of just how little wood Noah has.[147] While the word "ruff" eludes definition, "ryff" is another spelling for reef, a section of the sail.[148] Finally, when Noah returns to his work and must pray for God's aid, he specifically asks for help to "clink yon nails twain" (187). As Clifford Davidson notes, this line implies "a clinker-built ship" (*Technology* 11). Richard Beadle explains the significance of both "rowe" and "clinking" in his discussion of the York *Building of the Ark* pageant:

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[146] The angel's description is reminiscent of images which depict the ark as resembling a house. Clifford Davidson reproduces such an image in *Technology, Guilds, and Early English Drama* (7), and Christina M. Fitzgerald discusses the implication of the masculine community associated with the same image, arguing that it "conflates Ark and workshop" (360).

[147] The depositions in the 1516 Star Chamber case include a summary of articles in an "old book" of the Common Guild which stresses that any excess merchandise or any merchandise in time of scarcity

> [T]he boards were nailed together with 'revette(s)', whose points, having passed through the wood were turned over or flattened on metal plates with holes in them, known as roves ('rewe(s)'). This process was intended to prevent the nails from springing out when under pressure from the water when the vessel was afloat. ("Shipwrights" 57)

In the same vein, the seams to which God refers "were the gaps between the planks" of a clinkered ship which were "caulked with oakum or tow [fibers of flax or hemp], and sealed with pitch or resin" (Beadle, "Shipwrights" 57). For a pageant whose central character knows nothing of shipcraft, there are several allusions to ship-building terms and practices which give the characters an air of specialized knowledge.

In this context, the secrecy motif takes on even greater significance: the secrets Noah learns and betrays are craft secrets. The newly audible labour which is the consequence of Noah's drunken confession to his wife threatens the secrey of craft practices by drawing attention to those practices. Knowledge which is initially sacred,

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should be offered first to "the biggers in this Towne either of housez or of Schippes reasonable that pertayneth to their biggyng, for biggyng of shippes or of housez in this Towne that is most necessary to be vpholdyn shall be preferred" (Leadam 92-3). Wrights had priority of supplies even over the merchants who were seeking to solidify their monopoly. This civic recognition of the importance of supplies would have given weight to Noah's complaint.

[148] Davis tentatively suggests "rough-tree, spar" (156) for "ruff," but the *MED* does not confirm this reading. The *OED* offers "Of a ship: *in her ruff*, in full course" with the example "Shippe vnder Saile in her ruffe Sable" ("Ruff," def. n6-3). In conjunction with more familiar reference to "ruff" as an aspect of clothing, the *OED*'s definition suggests that the word applies to sails as well.

because God-given, and private is profaned by its public revelation. Uxor's curse emphasizes this trespass of craft boundaries: "Who devil made thee a wright?" she demands; "God give him evil to fayre" (172-3). While her curse is ironically blasphemous (since she essentially asks God to curse God), in a civic context, the statement recriminates people who share craft secrets with those not free of the craft. The breakdown of marital relations in this context becomes a metaphorical representation of the civic disorder that can result from this kind of trespass. While at first Uxor swears never to be friends again unless Noah reveals his activities, by the time he leaves, she cares not whether he is "friend or foe" (183), demonstrating how crossing craft boundaries disrupts relationships and devalues social categories.

At the same time as the pageant draws attention to the dangers of disrupting these boundaries, however, it also employs several tactics to elide and displace any resultant anxiety. In the first place, the physical, phenomenological reality of performance undermines the craft transgression represented on stage. While Noah may not be a shipwright, the man performing him was, or was at least sponsored by the Shipwrights. Transgression of craft boundaries without permission was the issue which instigated the 1516 Star Chamber case, but the man performing Noah, shipwright or no, did so under the specific auspices and control of the Shipwrights—it was their pageant after all. Secondly, on a narrative level, Noah's transgression is also excused because it is divinely inspired. These are extraordinary circumstances, and no audience member would expect Noah to refuse God's commandment in order to respect man-made craft boundaries.

A third tactic, however, displaces the guilt of Noah's transgression by manipulating the audience's empathy. While audience members might feel anxiety over the disruption of craft boundaries, they are ultimately meant to sympathize with Noah, who is doing God's work, as opposed to Uxor who is, wittingly or not, doing the devil's. Uxor's excessive condemnation of Noah represents a negative and extreme reaction to craft transgression that the audience is encouraged to reject, at least in part, because situational irony allows the audience to recognize that she is in the wrong on the level of the narrative. Moreover, the sense that Uxor's condemnation is inappropriate is compounded when she accuses Noah of the wrong thing, of sexual, not artisanal, infidelity.

The first indication that Uxor misinterprets the situation comes in the possible repetition of the word "prow" in the text.[149] The angel's initial instructions to Noah include the command to "make good purveyance for your prow" (72), playing on the double meaning for "prow" as a part of a ship and as profit. Later on, the devil warns Uxor that "All that thy husband goes about / Is little for thy prow" (126-7). When used with Noah, the word conflates communal benefit with the ship he is building, representing a more externally oriented and socially beneficent perspective of profit. In Uxor's case, however, there is no ship for the word to reference, so the word applies to a more personal and individual context. The concept of individual female profit raises motifs familiar from Chaucer's "Shipman's Tale" and his "Wife of Bath's Prologue," those of marital relations and sexual economy. Even if this allusion were too subtle, the pageant provides a number of sexual references to reinforce the point. First, there is the question of whether this Noah who is "six hundred winters of eld" and therefore

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[149] Bourne's original copy supplies "prove" and "Profit" (72, 127) for these two instances. Most editors of the text agree on "prow" in the first instance, but it is Davis alone who supplies "prow" in the second instance. He supplies the emendation to agree with the rhyme scheme.

"Unlusty" (78-9) has "wood."[150] The sexual innuendo of Noah's complaint is debatable, but Uxor's claim that "Men should have hear wide-where" when Noah "began to smite" (176-7) easily takes on a sexual connotation, which makes the nature of their "friendship" specifically sexual as well. Later, Noah's desire to "clink yon nails twain" (187) further alludes to sexual union. Each instance of clinking requires only one nail, but the image of two nails clinched or joined together implies a sexual metaphor.

In the context of this innuendo, Uxor's behaviour invokes a motif of the suspicious and jealous wife. There is no indication in the text that Uxor agrees with the devil's plan to trick Noah—he simply leaves her with the drink and the intimation that Noah is up to no good. It is only when Noah comes home, sweaty and exhausted, that she becomes suspicious. When she gets him drunk in order to make him share his secrets, she asks where he has been, not what he has been doing. She assumes that she already knows the latter: he has been having an affair. Her refusal to believe that he is building a ship becomes a comic assumption that the "ship" is his lover. It is this assumption which fuels her outraged response when he states that he is going back to his ship.

Understood as a comedy of misinterpretation, Uxor's scenes are not "an excrescence," but they are intended to disrupt narrative expectations. The audience is meant to recognize that Uxor is accusing Noah unfairly and incorrectly, that she has mistaken what kind of story she is supposed to be in. Laughter at or condemnation of

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[150] The *MED* defines "unlusty" as "Slothful, idle; listless, dull" and "lacking physical strength, weak, feeble" ("Unlusti," def. 1a, c). However, the *MED* recognizes sexual connotations for "lusti," which it defines as "(a) Pleasure-loving, voluptuary; (b) amorous; (c) lustful; *fig.* ardent," so it is reasonable to presume that "unlusty" could play off of the same connotations. Similarly, while the *MED* does not acknowledge sexual connotations for "Spyer, sprund, sprout, nor sprot" (84), there are numerous examples of middle English texts that use "staff" and "rod" as euphemisms for the male member, and Noah's terms for "wood" may employ comparable double meanings.

Uxor reinforces sympathy with Noah and excuses Noah's divinely ordained trespass of craft boundaries. He does trespass, but not in the ways he is accused of, so, by a narrative slight of hand, the audience is encouraged to acquit him. His guilt of craft infidelity is transmuted into Uxor's guilt for unfounded jealousy.

Despite this transference of craft to sexual infidelity and guilt from Noah to Uxor, the play ends with an emphasis on and anxiety over the need for unity. Noah's prayer for aid explicitly unites artisanal and sexual language:

> God send me help in hy
> 	To clink yon nails twain;
> God send me help in hy
> 	Your hand to hold again.
> That all well done may be
> 	My strokes be not in vain. (186-191)

On the surface, Noah is praying for God's assistance in finishing the boat through clinking nails and using tools. The request of "Your hand to hold again" suggests, however, that Noah is not just concerned with the ship. Cawley suggests that Noah is referring to God's hand (153 n 32), but Noah has never seen God, nor literally held his hand, whereas Uxor's warm greeting in the previous scene probably did involve this physical action. In fact, there is no indication that Noah has left Uxor yet, and it is equally possible that she is still standing in front of him or is at least on stage. It is more likely that "Your" refers to Uxor and that Noah is praying for God's assistance in fixing the damage to his marriage as well as finishing the ship. Noah's specific reference to clinking two nails and the sexual connotation of Noah's "strokes" both characterize the prayer as simultaneously referencing the craft and sexual labour needed to construct the ship of societal and marital salvation.

Of course, it is also significant that the ship Noah is building is the ark, a typological symbol of religious and social unity. Beadle points out that the "ark was commonly likened to the Church" ("Shipwrights" 60), and Patricia Badir's study of the Noah play in Hull similarly finds the ark to represent social unity and cohesion that protects the citizens of Hull from external corrupting forces ("Garrison" 295-6). Noah's completion of the ship promises to overcome all transgressions, real or imagined, by emphasizing the unity of its inhabitants, rather than their differences, just as the craft ordinances suggest participation in the play as a civic ceremonial is intended to overcome division through the creation of a larger whole. At the same time, nothing has really changed. Uxor is to be saved because she is Noah's wife, but she is still left out of the loop and Noah still benefits from his transgression of craft boundaries.

As Badir's work on Hull suggests, the ark as a symbol of civic cohesion works best when in reference to an external threat that the "walls" of the ark keep out. While the Scots were always a convenient Other for defining Newcastle's identity, more precise dating of the text reveals a specific historic instance of this threat to which the text responds. Despite suggestions that the text was written in the fifteenth century, a reference to international politics near the end of the pageant suggests composition or revision in the mid-sixteenth century and confirms the presence of an external Other which fuels the text's anxiety over social cohesion and unity.

Davis cautiously dates the play "about the middle of the fifteenth century, perhaps a little earlier" (xlvii) but also acknowledges that the text would certainly have undergone gradual revision over time (xliii). His early dating is partially supported by Beadle's assertion that "virtually all ships were clinker-built before the end of the fifteenth century" ("Shipwrights" 57). It is true that the sixteenth century saw newer ship-building practices develop, but Richard Unger notes that "The old method of building the exterior hull first never completely disappeared from the North . . . and clinker building remained in common use for many types of fishing vessels and other small boats even into the twentieth century" (58).[151] The text may represent a fifteenth-century composition, but it could just as easily reflect later revisions or rewritings.

Cawley revises Davis's date in conjunction with German scholarship on the text. By focusing on seventeenth-century title conventions, he places at least the copy, if not the composition, of the pageant in the sixteenth century. In support of Cawley's dating, I find evidence within the text itself that argues for revision or composition at some point between 1548 and 1560. This more specific dating relies on a reading of the word "Dolphin," found near the end of the text. In the final lines of the pageant, the devil's parting curse states:

> All that is gathered in this stead
>   That will not believe in me,
> I pray to Dolphin, prince of dead,
> Scald you all in his lead,

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[151] Unger also notes that "All of the arks on which Noah worked alone in northern European depictions were clinker-built" (141). Unger attributes this consistency to the dominant style of ship building in the North, but the choice to represent this style of building on stage may also reflect theatrical considerations. Skeleton-frame ship-building, as opposed to clinker-style ship-building, requires a team of labourers which the shipwright oversees. A craft which preferred to limit the number of characters on stage (either for aesthetic or financial reasons) might choose to depict a clinker-style construction because it realistically required fewer labourers, even if clinker-style construction was no longer the dominant form of ship-building. In other words, the style of ship construction depicted on stage does not limit the date of composition.

That never a one of you thrive nor thee. (202-6)

The reference to a dolphin as the devil's "god" seems nonsensical, particularly since dolphins were generally considered good luck. Stories of dolphins saving drowning sailors led to their interpretation as symbols of Christ (Tresidder 66). If the word intended, however, was Dauphin, then the curse makes far more sense.[152] The Dauphin fulfills the description "prince of dead" both as a reference to a foreign prince and, metonymically, as a source of death for the English in their long history of conflict across the channel. Moreover, for a Protestant audience, a Catholic Dauphin serves as an appropriate deity for the devil and a realistic threat for the audience. It was common practice in Reformation England to represent Catholic figures as demonic.[153] The negative reference to the Dauphin points to a revision or re-authoring of the pageant after the Reformation, echoing Paul Whitfield White's assertion that cycle plays could be and were revised to suit Protestant audiences ("Bible" 112-14).

For a specific period of Novocastrian history, however, a reference to the Dauphin was also a reference to their more familiar enemy, the Scots. In 1548, the six year old Mary, Queen of Scots was betrothed to the French prince and sought refuge in his father's court. She married the Dauphin in 1558, and he died two years later. For the period between 1548 and 1560, then, an author or reviser who included a reference to the Dauphin would also be referencing the double threat of allied French and Scottish enemies. The unification of these enemies increases the urgency for unity within the

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[152] The Arden edition of Shakespeare's *King Henry V* notes that the Quarto version of the play similarly uses "Dolphin" for "Dauphin" (330).

[153] The *English Short Title Catalogue* lists several evocatively titled, sixteenth-century pamphlets, such as the 1579 publication "Of two vvoonderful popish monsters, to wyt, of a popish asse which was found at Rome in the riuer of Tyber, and of a moonkish calfe, calued at Friberge in Misne. Which are the very foreshewings and tokens of Gods wrath, against blinde, obstinate, and monstrous Papistes."

English, Protestant town, providing an historical context which reinforces and amplifies the themes of the pageant. Recognizing this more precise period of composition or revision provides an external threat that the ark of social unity was intended to resist.

Conclusions

Newcastle's lone remaining pageant, while admittedly the worse for wear in its transmission, reflects the concerns both for civic order and unity and for the exclusion of the Scots that dominated Novocastrian civic history. The pageant warns against the disorder and discord that results from blurring craft boundaries while simultaneously eliding these divisions when convenient to emphasize social unity. The pageant represents this unity as both necessitated by and placed in contrast to the devilish Catholic threat of England's enemies, a threat which also seeks to foster disunity within the marital relationships which underpin social structures. The rest of the Newcastle cycle may be lost to history, but the historical context provides another narrative in which to make sense of this episode. Both the extant pageant and the position of the play in the language of craft ordinances reveal a civic expectation of the play's ability to transform conflict into order and unity.

Chapter Five

Expanding the Boundaries of the York Play

The York cycle has previously been considered the quintessential Corpus Christi play. For many years, scholars assumed that the York play represented the standard form of civic cycle drama, and that other plays of a similar nature had simply been lost to history. The variations of Chester's Whitsun plays, the N-Town and Towneley compilations, and numerous other traces of civic cycle activity did not match the York model, but these discrepancies were explained away as reflecting the pressures of Protestant reformation and economic recession. Medieval drama scholars have now come to realize that the York play is an unusual form of civic drama. Several factors make the York cycle unique: the large number of episodes (around fifty) and stations at which it was performed (generally twelve, but at times as many as sixteen); the narrowness of the streets in which the pageants were performed; and the date and scope of performance, which displaced the city's Corpus Christi procession to the following day.[154] Beyond these factors, however, the York cycle is also unique to the city and crafts which sponsored it because it serves to negotiate multiple conceptions of civic identity. Looking in depth at the history of craft sponsorship reveals a few of these different perspectives, and demonstrates how the definitions of civic identity changed over time.

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[154] For a discussion of the number of pageants in the cycle, see Richard Beadle's introduction to *The York Play* and Margaret Rogerson's "A Table of Contents for the York Corpus Christi Play." For the number and placement of stations, see Meg Twycross, "'Places to Hear the Play': Pageant Stations at York, 1398-1572" and "The Left-Hand-Side Theory: A Retraction," as well as Eileen White, "Places for Hearing the Corpus Christi Play in York" and "Places to Hear the Play: The Performance of the Corpus Christi Play at York." The physical limitations of performance spaces in York have inspired intense debates over the size, height, and positioning of the pageant wagons as well as the degree to which action occurred off stage, in the platea. For recent contributions to these discussions, see the special issue of *Early Theatre*, *The York Cycle Then and Now*, edited by Alexandra Johnston. For discussions of the procession's shift to the day after Corpus Christi, see Rogerson (née Dorrell), "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play" (especially 72-7), and Alexandra Johnston, "The Procession and Play of Corpus Christi in York after 1426."

I begin this chapter by reviewing the work of other scholars who have explored the relationship between the crafts and civic authorities with regard to the York cycle. Earlier discussions of the cycle's cultural function tended to characterize the play's role as either syncretic or antagonistic. More recently, scholars have cautioned against such generalizations, but their discussions continue to reinscribe fixed categories which fail to reflect the fluidity of participation in the cycle over time, and of the resulting identities which the cycle negotiates. Exploring craft histories in detail demonstrates this fluidity, and in turn reveals the changing nature of the York cycle as a representation of civic identity. The remainder of this chapter considers the history of two trades in particular, the Carpenters and Masons, whose histories suggest different motivations for producing pageants as well as different relationships with civic authority.[155] I first discuss the Carpenters and their pageant of the *Resurrection* in order to demonstrate how this craft's participation in the play was initially part of a larger project to assert authority over other wood-working associations. I then turn to the Masons to consider how a craft not of the civic franchise came to participate in the construction of a civic identity that attempted to dissolve jurisdictional boundaries. Finally, I return to the play as a whole to explore how a broader conception of its participants reveals the negotiation of a larger civic identity.

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[155] The material which follows has been inspired and adapted from my Master's thesis (2000, UBC). While my earlier thesis focused on the content of the pageants produced by building craftsmen, my research at the time led me to question the apparent unity of the associations which produced these pageants. This chapter takes up the question of associational fluidity more directly to consider the play as a site and tool of identity negotiation.

Due to the existence of a large, almost entirely extant script (forty-eight pageants were registered) and a comparatively large collection of records detailing both play and performance as well as other aspects of civic life, the York play has received more detailed study within its cultural context than other civic cycles.[156] Martin Stevens, for example, describes how the Skinners' *Entry to Jerusalem* makes use of the trope of the royal entry to map Jerusalem onto York, and he suggests that the Skinners flatter their civic masters in the representation of the pageant's burgesses (50-62). In "Staged Interpretations: Civic Rhetoric and Lollard Politics in the York Plays," Ruth Nissé modifies Stevens's interpretation by pointing out that the Skinners also usurp the burgesses' roles in playing them, facilitating a moment of subversion, although she, too, feels that the play serves the civic administration by "legitimating the vernacular language of civic government" (441). Relying on Heather Swanson's historical critique of arbitrary craft divisions, Sarah Beckwith takes an analysis of the play's cultural function further, arguing that the crafts are called into being for the sake of the play which simultaneously works to solidify mercantile power. In Beckwith's reading, the artificial craft divisions and the associated competition over funds for pageant production (called "pageant silver") serves to divide artisanal loyalties and reinforce the authority of the mercantile oligarchy that administered both the play and the city (47-53). This interpretation of the play's origins is supported by R. B. Dobson's discussion of York in the late fourteenth century. Noting the temporal coincidence of a national statute commanding craftsmen each to associate with a single craft, a proliferation of officially registered craft ordinances, and the first indications of cycle production, all in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, Dobson ponders the possibility that "the emergence of ambitious sequences of plays actually initiated craft organization, that the Corpus Christi plays brought a sophisticated craft structure into being rather than vice-versa" ("Craft Guilds" 103). He adds that "the civic élite of York would have found a carefully regulated annual production of Corpus Christi plays an ideal mechanism for identifying those crafts and their members" ("Craft Guilds" 103).[157] Like Beckwith, Dobson argues that the play was fostered by and served the interests of the civic administration.

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[156] Beadle reduces the number of pageants to forty-seven (*York Plays* 27).

The York play has also received a great deal of attention with respect to its function as ritual. Theorists such as Mervyn James and Charles Phythian-Adams suggest that the ritual of Corpus Christi processions and cycles served to establish civic unities.[158] However, Beckwith, as well as other scholars who build upon her ideas, argues against the success of this administrative project as a unifying force in York. Beckwith suggests, for example, that while the structure of the play serves the city, the play's content focuses on and celebrates labour. In so doing, the play subverts mercantile ideals and supplants them with artisanal ones (53).[159] Ultimately, for Beckwith, the pageants are "the cultural vehicles of sociopolitical life and the central means of their mutual articulation" (53). She resists the suggestion that the ritual of performance can provide closure but instead emphasizes a narrative of conflict in which cycle production participates. In "The Corpus

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[157] Dobson's point about York is similar to my conclusions concerning the attention to livery in the Newcastle ordinaries.

[158] James, "Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town" and Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen." James discusses English civic Corpus Christi activities in general, touching on several cities including York, while Phythian-Adams focuses on Coventry.

[159] In contrast, see Christina M. Fitzgerald's "Manning the Ark in York and Chester." She reads the *Building of the Ark* as a "dramatic conduct book" (371) for labour relations and confirms an ideological fantasy which serves the civic administration.

Christi Procession in Medieval York: A Symbolic Struggle in Public Space," Erik Paul Weissengruber similarly challenges a conception of a pre-existing or normative unity that is occasionally disrupted, emphasizing the process of ritual as one of constant negotiation. He agrees that the city dominated the crafts and was invested in maintaining that dominance, since they set the rules of the game, but he asserts that neither the civic position nor the response was univocal or stable. Claire Sponsler makes a similar point in "The Culture of the Spectator: Conformity and Resistance to Medieval Performances." Considering cycle drama in general from the perspective of reception theory, she emphasizes "the tendency of all activities, events, and performances to escape the bounds of their intended effects and local contexts" (20). Sponsler explores a specific example of this tendency to escape the bounds in Chapter Six of *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods and Theatricality in Late Medieval England*, where she associates the violated bodies in the York play with Christ's wounded body and sees this association as an opportunity for resistance against metaphors of civic unity and the healthy, labouring body.

These writers cogently warn against assuming a univocal intention or response on the part of the participants. At the same time, however, they reify the York play as a site of conflict, as a text which serves first and foremost the civic authorities, and only secondarily and reluctantly the interests of the crafts who undertook the text's production. While the artificial division of labour that underpinned the play and the council's assumed authority to arbitrate craft conflicts over pageant funding both confirm the oligarchy's use of the cycle as a means of control, these factors do not exclude the potential of other motivations among participants. Rather than seeing the play as a pre-existing structure which craft participants must subvert or manipulate to their own ends, scholars should consider what motivated these crafts to participate in the first place. If the crafts had, as a whole, not been convinced that the production was to their benefit, they would have resisted its instigation.

One answer to the question of craft motivation has been the logic of trade symbolism. York was the play that first inspired this explanation of craft participation, and it provides the most convincing examples of pageants designed to reflect their sponsoring associations. Donald McClure's "Commercialism in the York Mystery Cycle" explores specific connections between craft products and staging for *The Dream of Pilate's Wife*, *The Trial Before Herod*, and *The Building of the Ark*, while Alan Justice's "Trade Symbolism in the York Cycle" identifies conceptual associations between twenty-eight crafts and their pageants. Anne Higgins considers the issue in more detail in "Work and Plays: Guild Casting in the Corpus Christi Drama," where she posits three casting principles: practical, commercial, and interpretive. Practical casting reflects a craft's ability to supply the necessary sets, props, or costumes; commercial casting provides opportunities to demonstrate the products of a craft's trade on stage; and interpretive casting emphasizes symbolic associations between a craft's labour and the episode depicted. These three principles frequently overlap; however, as I suggested in Chapter Two, the appropriateness of this casting can reflect an interpretive act that occurs after the fact. Trade symbolism can suggest how a craft's sponsorship may have impacted the production and its reception, but it does not sufficiently answer the question of why crafts would participate in the first place.

Not only does the assumption of antagonism draw scholarly attention away from divergent motivations for participation, but it also elides the range of participants involved in the pageants. Arguments which privilege civic dominance, craft resistance, or a negotiation of power between the two assume restricted civic and artisanal identities defined by the geographical boundaries of the civic franchise, but the physical city of York encompassed several administrative jurisdictions. In addition to the civic franchise, York was comprised of a number of religious liberties, including the extensive grounds of York Minster, St. Mary's Abbey, and St. Leonard's Hospital; the royal liberty of the castle was also beyond the bounds of civic authority. Focusing on tensions between crafts and civic authorities causes scholars to undervalue participation from these other jurisdictions in considering the cultural function of the York play. Studies of the play route have also contributed to this sense that the play exclusively represented franchise interests. The cycle route turned east at the Minster, into the civic jurisdiction, and ended in the marketplace of the Pavement, while religious processions and royal entries turned west, culminating in the religious liberties. In analyzing the pageant route, scholars have generally concluded that the eastward turn signals a performance focused on and for the civic franchise as opposed to the larger town. In "'Places to Hear the Play': Pageant Stations at York, 1398-1572," Meg Twycross suggests the possibility that pageants played towards the left-hand side of the street (18-20). Higgins sees this orientation as playing "*outward*, toward the rival franchises" ("Streets and Markets" 87), and she builds on this idea in conjunction with the pageant route to suggest that the play educates non-citizens about "who the freemen of York were and how their freedom constituted itself" (87). While further research into performance locations and practicalities has led

Twycross to renounce the "left-hand-side" theory, the sense that the physical route draws an imaginary boundary in the streets maintains a conceptual division between inside and outside, franchise and liberties, that continues to influence scholarship on the play.

The existence of tensions between competing jurisdictions was an historical reality. A craft's ability to oversee production, and incidentally to fund its pageant, relied on its authority over those men and women who practiced the trade in question, but artisans in the liberties were beyond their purview. Residents of the liberties were not required to contribute to the pageants, were not subject to craft rules, and were free from having the quality of their work overseen by the craft. Freedom from craft jurisdiction also allowed them to sell their products and labour more cheaply, since they did not have to contribute to the craft's finances. As in Chester, jurisdictional boundaries also caused difficulty for the civic administration. Conflicts ranged from minor misdemeanours, such as women from the liberties selling underweight bread in the franchise, to major infractions, such as brawls and the forced extraction of tolls and pageant silver.[160]

As George Sheeran has suggested, however, these conflicts reflect extreme circumstances, not mundane ones: "for the purposes of work or leisure people, for most of the time, must have crossed and recrossed notional boundaries with little thought" (46). Emphasizing the pageant route as a symbolic boundary overdetermines the impact of jurisdictional divisions in daily life and understates the range of participants involved in the play. Alfred Chambers, for example, examines three records that suggest that the

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[160] In a letter to the Archbishop in 1503, the mayor requests redress for an altercation with a man under the Archbishop's jurisdiction that arose because the Carpenters "accordyng to the auncient custome of theyr Craft toke of hym iij d to pagiaunt money" (*REED: York* 190-1). He also mentions a woman from the liberties who was to be punished for selling underweight bread in the city, but whom the mayor let off lightly "for pitie & neghbourhed."

Vicars Choral (which owned two tile yards) contributed financially to the Tilemakers' pageant; this relationship troubles firm distinctions of franchise and liberty with respect to pageant sponsorship. Another record which calls these boundaries into question is the evidence for pageant wagon storage on the Minster precincts in 1388 which Alexandra Johnston discusses in "York Pageant House: New Evidence." These records attest to the permeability of the liberty-franchise boundary and suggest a potential redefinition of "civic" as an identity which includes the whole city, and not just the civic franchise.

Resurrections and Insurrections: The Carpenters' Pageant

In "The Corpus Christi Procession in Medieval York," Weissengruber uses the Carpenters' history with the Corpus Christi procession and play as an example of "one of the many guilds who tried to alter the definitions imposed upon them" (123) by the civic authorities. He depicts this history as one where the city manages, over time, to suppress the Carpenters and reduce their social status by amalgamating them with other woodworking crafts as sponsors of the *Resurrection* pageant. Weissengruber asserts that "all these different groups suffered a collective loss of distinction when they were merged" (124) and suggests that the Carpenters continued to agitate, if unsuccessfully, for a reinstatement of their former glory. While Weissengruber is correct that the Carpenters did eventually lose status in York, he oversimplifies the history of their social fall by assuming a conflictual relationship between craft and city and overlooking tensions between crafts. In particular, he fails to recognize a crucial distinction between the Carpenters' artisanal activities and their fraternity of the Resurrection, a distinction which must impact an understanding of the Carpenters' participation in the cycle, their relationship to other wood-working crafts, and their eventual demotion in the civic hierarchy.

The fraternity's relationship to the craft as a whole and to the craft's participation in civic ceremonials alters a conception of their pageant sponsorship as both an obligation imposed by the civic authorities and an act representing a strictly labour-based identity. The Carpenters' ordinances, registered in 1482, assert the separation between trade and fraternity. The first order begins by praising the fraternity, or "brod*er*hode," for their dedication because they

> of long continuaunc have vsid and as ȝit yerly vsis to fynd of thar p*ro*pir cost*is* a lyght of diwyrs torchis in the fest of corpus chr*ist*i day or of the Morn aftir in the hono*ur* & worship of god & all saint*is* & to go in p*re*ssession w*ith* the same torchis w*ith* the blessid Sacrament . . . and also have done & vsyd diwyrs odir Right full good & hono*ur*abill deidis . . . . (*REED: York* 126)[161]

It is as a fraternity that the craft participates in the specific civic ceremonial of the Corpus Christi procession, along with other "good deeds" that the council commends. Having assured the Carpenters that this honourable "ffrat*er*nite & bredirhode shalbe her aftir for ewyr kept & Contineud as it has beyn in tymis passid," the order then makes a specific distinction between the fraternity and the occupation of carpentry. Having set a rate for financial contribution to the fraternity, the order continues: "p*ro*uidyng all way that eu*ery* Man of the said occupacion w*ith* in the said Cite shalnot be compellid ne boundyn to be of the said ffrat*er*nit*e* ne brodirhod ne noyn to be thar of bot soch as will of thar ffree will." In other words, carpenters could be members of the craft without having to belong to the craft's fraternity.[162] The ordinance both praises the existence of the fraternity and mandates its separation from the craft's artisanal activities.

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[161] Weissengruber also quotes this passage (123), but his quotation includes a phrase not found in the *REED: York* (126) or *York Memorandum Book* (2: 278) transcriptions. While Weissengruber's conception of the fluidity of relationships with respect to the play is valuable, readers would be advised to approach his discussion of specific records with caution.

While there is no extant evidence which identifies this fraternity's founding date, several details suggest that the brotherhood was long-standing and that it was in existence by the time the Carpenters joined both the procession and the play. The 1482 ordinances state that the fraternity dates from "old tyme" (*YMB* 2: 278), but equally relevant is the assertion that the fraternity provided torches for the Corpus Christi procession "in the fest of corpus chr*ist*i day or of the Morn aftir" (*REED: York* 126). Weissengruber reads this assertion as a command (one which he feels reveals a continuing uncertainty about the date of the procession), but his interpretation does not match the ordinance's approving tone. The opening section, quoted above, praises the fraternity for its voluntary involvement; it does not enforce participation.[163] Another explanation for the identification of two, alternate procession days is that the order acknowledges the fraternity's participation from a time before the procession had been moved to the day after Corpus Christi. The first indication of this shift in York appears in 1476, in a civic order recording organizational details, although the council had considered splitting the procession and play as early as 1426.[164] The Carpenters' 1482 ordinances allude to this shift and imply that the fraternity participated in the procession by the 1470s at the latest.

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[162] Maud Sellers notes in her introduction to the *York Memorandum Book* that

> the ordinances of the fraternity and mistery are inextricably mixed; it is only by intrinsic evidence that the one can be differentiated from the other. Still the compilers have left no possibility of error. The fourteen fraternity clauses have either the word fraternity or brotherhood or brother expressly used; in the remaining eight mistery ordinances these words are absent—occupation, master, apprentice, yongman take their place. (2: xxxvii)

Sellers also reprints an indenture between the Augustinian friary and the Carpenters which identifies the fraternity's focus as that of the Resurrection (2: xxxviii-xl), and she adds, "It is obvious from this document that the fraternity, represented by the keepers, had no legal status apart from the mistery, represented by the searchers; fraternity and mistery were completely interdependent."

[163] The point of this first order is to confirm the fraternity's continuance, establish the rate of financial contribution, and warn against enforced membership. The fraternity's participation in the procession is presented as a justification for this order, not the force of its intention.

An earlier set of ordinances, from 1462, also attests to the fraternity's presence. In that year the council recorded that "eu*er*y free man of þis Citee þat occupies as maist*er* in the saide Crafte not beyng of þe frat*er*nite of the same" were to support the pageant "as other wrightes doo that be of the same frat*er*nite" (*REED: York* 92-3). Again, the distinction between craft and fraternity is explicit. More significantly, the order implies that the fraternity was in charge of the pageant's production, while all carpenters, whether fraternity members or not, were required to support the pageant financially. Maud Sellers suggests that the later 1482 ordinances characterize the pageant as the responsibility of the artisans, but the ordinance only makes similar arrangements for financial contribution, not for production. Moreover, the mandated contribution in 1462 is for the pageant and the torches of the procession, which suggests that the same group was responsible for both activities. At the same time, the vague allusion to "diwyrs odir Right full good & hono*u*rabill deidis" undertaken by the fraternity in 1482 leaves room for the possibility that the pageant continued to be one of those responsibilities.

Finally, the fraternity's connection to both the procession and the pageant implies an even earlier origin for this religious association. To understand this connection, I must discuss the structure and function of the procession more carefully. The first detailed description of the procession comes from the 1415 *Ordo paginarum*, a working document which traced shifting pageant assignments and listed the order of participants in the procession.[165] Another list from 1501 demonstrates that this order changed over time; nonetheless, the 1415 *Ordo* establishes a hierarchical principle for the procession, beginning with lower status groups, like the Porters and the Weavers' servants, and culminating with the aldermen and mayor who preceded the sacrament itself. Of the ten craft associations named in the *Ordo*, the Carpenters are listed as processing second last, followed only by the Tailors, although both are potentially part of a larger group that marches on the left of the Weavers' servants and Cordwainers (leather shoe makers). *REED: York* translates the order as follows:

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[164] Initially the plan was to keep the procession on Corpus Christi and present the play on the preceding day. Friar William Melton floated this idea in a sermon and the council and commons agreed in an order recorded eight days after the play's performance in 1426. There is no evidence suggesting whether the order was maintained the following year, or why the order was eventually reversed, giving Corpus Christi day to the play and postponing the procession to the following day. See Rogerson (née Dorrell), "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play," and Johnston, "The Procession and Play of Corpus Christi in York after 1426."

> It is ordered that the Porters (and) Cobblers go before first, and then the Weavers' servants and the Cordwainers from the right. And from the other side, the Fullers, Cutlers, Girdlers, Chaloners, Carpenters, (and) Tailors. And then the honourable citizens, and afterwards the Twenty-four, the Twelve, the mayor, and the four torches of Master Thomas de Bukton. (709)[166]

It is not absolutely clear that the Fullers through to Tailors were all expected to march on the left; if they were, there must have been a significant number of Weaver's servants and Cordwainers to balance out the representatives of the other six associations.[167]

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[165] See Beadle and Peter Meredith's facsimile of the *The York Play*, which includes a facsimile and discussion of the *Ordo paginarum* (li-lxi).

[166] The Latin reads: "Ordinatu*m* est q*u*od Porto*urs* Coblers eant antea primo / Et tunc a dexteris Webster*seruan*tz & Cordwaners / Et ex oppos*i*to ffullers cuttellers Girdellers Chaloners Carpenters Taillo*urs* Et tunc boni ciues et postea xxiiij xxij Maior & iiij^{or} torch*ee* Mag*ist*ri Thome de Bukton" (*REED: York* 24)

[167] There does seem to be a connection between the Cordwainers and Carpenters. Members of these groups attacked the Skinners in the procession in 1419, and rent payments for the two crafts' pageant storage are generally listed together in the Bridgemasters' Account Rolls, while most other crafts are

Regardless of the distribution from left to right, however, this order raises the question of why the Carpenters, Tailors and (potentially) Cordwainers would be considered of sufficient stature to process closer to the host than other craftsmen. By 1501, the wealthy and prominent Mercers had gained this prestigious position, reflecting the craft's political, economic and social significance. What equivalent factors would lend the Carpenters the necessary status for their position in the procession nearly a century earlier?

One explanation is that these groups were processing not as crafts but as fraternities. *VCH: York* states that the Merchant Tailors' *maison dieu* "was built before 1415, when it was the hall of St. John the Baptist's confraternity, many of whose members were also members of the tailors' guild" (423). The Cordwainers similarly exhibited religious activity that might signal the presence of a fraternity: they maintained a light in the Minster and "had a bedehouse attached to St. Denys's Church" (*VCH: York* 96). They also founded a *maison dieu* "before 1436" (423).[168] Given this devout company, it seems reasonable that the Carpenters' position in the procession was a reflection of their religious affiliation with the fraternity of the Resurrection rather than their status as a building trade.[169] An early association between fraternity and occupation

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entered separately. These payments begin in 1424 and are identified as being "pro *terra*," "for land" (*REED: York* 40, 726) initially, and later "*pro* domo pagine sue," "for their pageant house" (56, 738) and "*pro* domo pagin*arum* suar*um*," "for the house of their pageants" (57, 738). These associations may simply be coincidental, but they may also reflect a relationship fostered by a shared position in the hierarchy of the procession.

[168] Angelo Raine identifies this terminus ad quem by means of a 1436 bequest to "the poor in the Maison Dieu of John Marston" (*Mediaeval York* 102). The Freeman's Register identifies a "Johannes de Marton, cordewaner" (Collins 101) made free in 1397.

[169] This evidence of religious association as a measure of hierarchical status in the procession raises questions about the other participants. It would be worthwhile to search the archives both for evidence of the participants' involvement in religious associations and for contemporary artisanal-religious

would also explain the original assignation of the *Resurrection* pageant to the Carpenters, an assignation first recorded in the 1415 *Ordo* pageant list.

The suggestion that the fraternity motivated the Carpenters' sponsorship of the *Resurrection* pageant is not new.[170] Despite this recognition, there has been little consideration of the significance of the fraternity, as opposed to the occupation, producing the pageant. The general consensus is that crafts and fraternities were two sides of the same coin, that they exhibited a continuity which makes separate discussion of them somewhat pedantic. To a degree, this perspective is correct: the *Ordo* and the register of the play both identify the sponsors as Carpenters without distinguishing which aspect of the association took responsibility for the pageant. Similarly, the pageant contributions mandated in the 1482 ordinances are explicitly designated for "the pagent of the wryght*is*" (*REED: York* 127). If the fraternity and craft were seen as entirely separate, then the fraternity's participation would have been identified by name. However, both the 1462 and 1482 ordinances explicitly recognize a distinction, one with economic and social implications. Non-fraternity members were obligated to contribute financially to the fraternity's ceremonial and religious responsibilities, those of the procession and pageant, but they did not pay for or receive the benefits of membership:

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associations not represented in the procession. Evidence of either would inform our understanding of the rationale behind procession participation. In particular, it would be fruitful to explore the Skinners' relationship to religious association. They are not listed in the 1415 list, but were the focus of an attack by the Carpenters and Cordwainers in the procession of 1419 (*REED: York* 32-3). *The Certificates of the Commissioners Appointed to Survey the Chantries, Guilds, Hospitals, etc., in the County of York* (William Page, ed.) provides some details of religious association and informs the *VCH: York* analysis, but these surveys were a product of the Protestant reformation and so are limited both by purpose and historical perspective.

[170] See, for example, Sellers's introduction to the *York Memorandum Book*, especially 2: xxxvii-xxxviii. Sellers reads the evidence in light of the now abandoned theory that the play was a gradually secularized production with ecclesiastical origins, but she asserts a connection between the fraternity's focus and the subject of the Carpenters' pageant.

bi-annual church services, masses for the dead, burial services, financial relief for destitution or old age, and the benefit of preferential hiring practices (*YMB* 2: 278-80). For the fraternity's part, the funds for the procession and pageant were probably co-extensive with funds for the fraternity's other activities. All Carpenters were required to support the fraternity to some degree, even if that support was designated for or justified by specific activities, but only some of these Carpenters benefited from the security and prestige of the fraternity.

What, then, does the recognition of the fraternity's significance suggest? First, it implies a religious motivation both for participation in the procession and play and in the choice of pageant subject. While scholars frequently reiterate the importance of religious feeling in civic drama, a focus on artisanal participation can at times eclipse this religious motivation. Given the fraternity's dedication to the Resurrection, it seems likely that the pageant assignment was sought after, rather than imposed from above by a tyrannical civic administration. At the very least, the city's and craft's desires for the production seem to have coincided. Acknowledging the fraternity's central role in the production serves as a reminder of the play's religious purpose and as a caution against defining the character of the York play entirely with respect to labour and labour relations. Second, the fraternity's central role implies the existence of a core group of Carpenters, those who were both artisans and members of the fraternity, who had the power to compel non-fraternity members to contribute to their public, religious activities.

Combining a recognition of this power dynamic with an analysis of the city's shifting demographics puts inter-craft relationships in perspective and explains the Carpenters' eventual demotion in the civic hierarchy. Heather Swanson's analysis of the freemen's roll in *Building Craftsmen in Late Medieval York* reveals first an expansion and then a contraction in the number of wood-working artisans over the fourteenth to early sixteenth centuries.[171] Of those trades mentioned in the 1482 ordinance, (the Carpenters, Sawyers, Carvers, Joiners, and Cartwrights), the Carpenters continued to dominate the number of wood-working masters who took out the freedom over the period of the play's initial development. At the same time, however, both the overall numbers and the percentage of Carpenters to the whole steadily decreased. The following tables these decreases in admissions and the share of freemen.

Table 9: York Wood-workers' Admissions to the Freedom[172]

	1351-1400	1401-1450	1451-1500	1501-1534
Carpenters	109	115	65	42
Cartwrights	18	11	11	7
Carvers	4	19	12	15
Joiners	17	20	2	3
Sawyers	25	38	28	11
Total	173	203	118	78

Table 10: York Carpenters' Admissions Compared to other Wood-Working Trades

	1351-1400	1401-1450	1451-1500	1501-1534
Ratio	109:64	115:88	65:53	42:36
Percentage: Carpenters	63%	57%	55%	52%
Percentage: Other Trades	37%	43%	45%	48%

Whereas one hundred and nine Carpenters took out the freedom between 1351-1400, the period in which York's play began, only sixty-five took out the freedom between 1451-

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[171] Employing the freemen's register as a measure of demographics and trade distinctions is fraught with a number of difficulties. Trade designations were not always recorded in the early years of the Register, and freedom through patrimony did not begin to be recorded until the mid-fifteenth century. The Register also rarely records women and almost never poorer or unskilled laborers. For discussion on the problems inherent in using the register as a measure of populations and industries, see Swanson's *Building Craftsmen*, "Illusion," and Dobson's "Admissions." The other difficulty with these figures is the fluidity of trade distinction. Swanson's study of the building trades demonstrates the way in which an artisan's identified trade changed from record to record, especially among the wood-working trades.

[172] These numbers are taken from a more detailed table in Swanson's *Building Craftsmen*, but the ratios and percentages in the second table are from my own calculations based on her work. She also provides enrollment numbers for Shipwrights and Turners, but I have not included them here because they are not identified in the 1482 ordinances. Swanson makes the important point, however, that the distinction between shipwrights and carpenters may be arbitrary, so the number of carpenters might be slightly higher. There are around twelve shipwrights enrolled for each fifty year period.

1500, while their share of the overall enrollments fell from 63% to 55%. This decline would have been evident by the second half of the fifteenth century, the period of the two ordinances. As the fraternity's numbers fell, they were motivated to find other sources of funding, both by asserting the craft's monopoly over tasks associated with carpentry and by claiming authority over related trades. As early as 1425, the city council decided in favour of the Carpenters in a dispute with the Tilers over the production of louvers (smoke vents for open hearths). Tilers who made louvers were to contribute 1d to the Carpenters' pageant each year.

On its own, the conflict between the Carpenters and Tilers resembles other confrontations which arose when more than one trade had a potential right to the labour entailed. These conflicts were often motivated by the need for pageant funding, and resulted in numerous orders enforcing cross-trade financial contributions to pageants.[173] The case of the Carpenters and Tilers, however, sets a precedent for the Carpenters' later behaviour towards other wood-working crafts who were not otherwise involved in pageant production. These later conflicts reveal a complex and ultimately fragile construction of craft authority tied to the fraternity's participation in the procession and play.

While the incident with the Tilers occurred at the height of the Carpenters' enrollments, later records demonstrate an increasing concern with expanding the financial base of support for the fraternity's activities. As previously noted, the 1462 ordinance requires carpenters not of the fraternity to contribute to the pageant. The same order also requires any foreigners operating as master carpenters to contribute.[174] While the contribution of foreigners would become common in the last quarter of the century, the Carpenters' attainment of these contributions in 1462 was a remarkable achievement.[175] The 1482 ordinance also demonstrates the Carpenters' explicit co-option of other wood-working crafts, requiring pageant contributions from "all Wryghtys Sawers Caruers iyoners & Cartwryght*is*" including payments for "ony yorney Man s*er*uant or . . . aprentys" (*REED: York* 127). Far from being a merger, as Weissengruber suggests, this co-option is an explicit application of power: the craft used the authority garnered by the fraternity's participation in civic ceremonials to justify an expansion of its authority over other, related trades as a means of increasing financial contributions. Other scholars have acknowledged the power dynamic implied by these ordinances: Sellers states that "the phraseology of the ordinance . . . points to their [i.e. the other crafts] being subsidiary rather than submerged in the carpenters" (2: xxxviii), while Swanson sees the ordinances as "giving the master carpenters an organization to reinforce their status vis-à-vis the servants" (*Medieval Artisans* 86). While the ordinances do not include these other crafts in the rules for apprenticeship and labour quality, they do presume an authority over behaviour. Fines are established for rebelling against searchers, insulting or injuring other artisans, and revealing craft business to outsiders (*YMB* 2: 282).

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[173] *REED: York*'s summary of "Pageants in the Corpus Christi Play" lists several similar examples, such as the Plasterers' contributions to the Masons' when the former made stone walls or foundations, and the requests of both the Spicers and Vintners for the right to pageant silver from people selling sweet wines (658, 662, 666).

The application of power, however, goes beyond entrenching a moral hierarchy of wood-workers; most of the artisans ordered to contribute either had or were soon to develop their own distinct associations. The Joiners registered their ordinances around 1413, while the fateful order of 1530 which confirmed the Carpenters' demotion involved a conflict between the Carpenters, on one hand, and the Joiners and Carvers, on the other, each represented by their own craft searchers. The Cartwrights similarly asserted their independence from the Carpenters in 1500, and again in 1507, when the council confirmed a financial contribution but otherwise forbade the Carpenters to "vex trouble ne distreyn" (*REED: York* 183) the Cartwrights. Even the Sawyers made a bid for freedom, although apparently unsuccessfully. The House Book entries for 1485 cryptically attest to "the mat*er* hanging in travaux betwix the Sawers and Wright*es* conc*er*ning the bringfurth of the padgeant of ffergus" (*REED: York* 136). In the same year, the Linenweavers who had previously been responsible for the Fergus pageant were reassigned to the support of other pageants, and it would seem that the Sawyers had considered either supporting the Linenweavers before the reassignment or taking over the pageant in their place. Of all the wood-working trades, the Sawyers' numbers remained the most stable, maintaining an average of thirty freemen enrolled in each fifty year period of Swanson's study. Moreover, while trade distinctions in the freemen's register are somewhat fluid, Swanson notes that men described as sawyers in the freemen's register generally have the same designation when they appear in other records (*Building Craftsmen* 11). This continuity implies a consistent self identification over a long period of time, one which may have motivated the desire to break free from the Carpenters' control, either in support of another craft or, more likely, with the intention of representing their independence from the Carpenters by producing their own pageant. While the attempt appears to have failed—the Linenweavers were reassigned to their old pageant, and nothing further is recorded of the Sawyers' interest—the attempt reflects a rejection of the Carpenters' assumed authority over the other wood-working crafts.

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[174] This order was still in effect in 1503, when the Mayor wrote to the Archbishop of York to request redress from a knight who was harassing the town because he had been forced to pay pageant money to the Carpenters "according to the auncient custome of theyr Craft" (*REED: York* 190).

[175] See below, the section entitled "Response to Recession: Urban Labour and Civic Identity."

The Carpenters' failing fortunes and their increasingly unsupportable stance of superiority eventually combined to undermine the craft's prestige and authority. Even before their crisis, the Carpenters were heavy-handed in defending what they felt were their rights. While the city ruled in their favour in the 1425 conflict with the Tilers, the council also required that the Carpenters return the money they had seized by distraint. The clause in the 1482 ordinances forbidding the fraternity to compel membership implies that they had been doing so, while the settlement with the Cartwrights in 1500 similarly implies the Carpenters' interference in the other craft's affairs. By 1500, the Carpenters had also significantly lost ground with respect to the procession. They now processed in the middle of the other crafts, five ranks away from the coveted position nearest the host. Their demotion in the procession was reflected in their continuing loss of authority over other crafts. When the labourers complained in 1505 that the Carpenters would not allow them to "set in a stancon with a lappe, mayk a bede, a shelffe, a forme, a stole, nail a burde, a dore, a yate, a wyndowe," the council confirmed the labourers' right to do these jobs without paying fees to the Carpenters, so long as they made "no newe mortre" (*YCR* 3: 15). In 1507, when the council again had to enforce the distinction between the Cartwrights and the Carpenters, elements of the order suggest that it was the Carpenters' actions which had inspired the ruling. The searchers of the Carpenters were present to bind themselves and their craft to the agreement, but no Cartwrights are mentioned (*REED: York* 204).

The Carpenters' losses culminated in the conflict with the Joiners and Carvers in 1530. The Carpenters still saw themselves as superior, since they "wold not calle the forsaid*es* Ioyno*u*rs & Carvers to thayre accomptes & reknyng*es*" (*REED: York* 252). They had also caused unspecified trouble with respect to the procession, possibly excluding the Joiners and Carvers or forcing them to process in a lower position, given that part of the council's solution was to have the two groups march side by side. More significant, however, was the council's decision to dissolve the distinction between the two associations: the Mayor ordered that the two groups thenceforth "be as oone occupacion & . . . bere like Charg*es*" (*REED: York* 252). The Joiners and Carvers had challenged the Carpenters claim to authority and won. The re-unification did not go smoothly, for the two groups continued to quarrel for most of the century, but another event would have further reduced the Carpenters' claim to exclusivity.[176] If the Carpenters' fraternity had survived the craft's amalgamation with the Joiners and Carvers, it would have been officially suppressed by the Dissolution of the Colleges Act in 1547. Eight years later, in 1555, the Carpenters and Joiners finally registered joint ordinances (*YCR* 5: 112), perhaps a sign that the Carpenters had previously held out hope for a return to their former glory.

The Carpenters' initial status and authority and their eventual downfall cannot be attributed to their participation in the procession and play alone; nor can it be explained by the model of a conflictual relationship between the craft and the city. Their history with the play was influenced by their religious devotion and the shifting power dynamics among crafts, just as their involvement with civic ceremonials became a tool for negotiating power and justifying an extension of their authority. At the same time, the crafts which the Carpenters attempted to dominate learned to use these tools against them: the Cartwrights insisted on fulfilling only the required contribution; the Sawyers attempted to gain independence through pageant association; and the Joiners and Carvers demanded full representation in exchange for contribution. Rather than intentionally demoting the Carpenters, the 1482 ordinances indirectly fostered the development of other crafts, giving them an organization against which they could define their own identities. Civic ceremonials exist as a relation between conceptions of identity; they are both the tools and the staging grounds where these identities are continually negotiated.

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[176] For records on the quarrels between the Carpenters and the Carvers and Joiners, see *YCR* 5:99-100.

Beyond the City Limits: The Masons and the York Cycle

Like the Carpenters, the Masons' history with the play challenges clear-cut divisions between communities. The Masons are unusual for two principal reasons: they owned three different plays over the course of a century, and they seem not to have been organized within the civic jurisdiction, thus defying the traditional dichotomy between liberty and franchise. In the section which follows, I will begin by reviewing the craft's history with the play. I will then turn to a consideration of the craft itself in order to explain the Masons' relationship to the play and ultimately their role in the construction of civic identity. This exploration of the craft's involvement in the York cycle reveals an association which is not exclusively based in either the civic franchise or the religious liberties, but which renegotiates those traditional boundaries, and in so doing, provides an alternative conception of the civic community.

The earliest record of the Masons' involvement with the York play highlights that involvement as extraordinary. The 1415 *Ordo* associates the craft with three separate pageants: "Herod questioning the three kings," "The presentation of Christ in the temple," and "The carrying of the body of Mary" (*REED: York* 710-11).[177] Later records clarify that the Masons adopted responsibility for these pageants at different times, rather than producing them all at the same time, but the Masons' connection with multiple pageants was nonetheless unusual. While financial contributors shifted regularly, pageant ownership was generally stable. When changes did occur, they were generally due to larger structural modification in the play as a whole. For example, owners might be reassigned when pageants were amalgamated, as when the Passion sequence was revised in the 1420s, or removed, as when the Marian pageants were cancelled in the 1550s. As well, new crafts could become pageant owners when the previous owners could no longer afford their obligations.[178] It was, however, rare for a craft to change pageant assignments as owners, yet the Masons did so twice, taking responsibility for three different pageants over the course of the fifteenth century.

The Masons' first pageant was *The Carrying of the Body of Mary*, otherwise known as *Fergus*, a reference to the name of a central character. While the text of the pageant was never recorded in the city's register, the *Ordo* references an apocryphal story about the funeral of the Virgin, during which Jews attempt to defame the bier and are miraculously punished.[179] The ordo describes the presence of:

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[177] The *Ordo* provides two lists of crafts and pageants. The first, which includes pageant abstracts, has Linenweavers written over an erasure in connection with *The Carrying of the Body of Mary*. The second list provides a summary of crafts and titles, and it is in this list that the Masons are identified three times.

[178] These past owners often became financial contributors in turn and could be reassigned several times in this capacity. The Linenweavers, for example, who took over *The Carrying of the Body of Mary* sometime after the Masons abandoned it in 1431-2, were reassigned to support the Cardmakers' pageant of *The Creation of Adam and Eve* in 1485, and then assigned to the Cutlers' *Conspiracy* in 1493. Unlike other past owners, however, the Linenweavers maintained a connection with their old pageant: an order in 1518 confirms the contribution to the Cutlers but also establishes financial contribution to the Linenweavers if they choose to perform the burial pageant in the future.

> Four apostles <carrying the bier of
> Mary,> and Fergus hanging upon the
> bier <with two oth>er Jews °and one
> angel° (*REED: York* 709)

While the names change, the general story is that Fergus' hands stick to the bier, possibly coming off in a manner similar to the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, and Fergus is encouraged to convert in order to save himself. An angel then descends to heal the repentant and converting Jews. As Ruth Evans has noted, "This episode is commemorated twice in the medieval stained glass of York Minster" (200), in windows dating from the early to mid-fourteenth century. The windows suggest a local familiarity with the legend, and the unusual inclusion of a miracle story in the cycle may speak to a religious affiliation among the Masons.[180] Certainly a pageant about the Virgin's funeral would be expected to be a solemn and devotional performance, one reflecting well on the performing craft.

Regardless of the initial motivations, however, the one extant description of this pageant in performance suggests that the episode failed to live up to both the audience's and the Masons' expectations. The audience objected to the apocryphal content of the play, and found the staging of the miracle amusing; nor were they loath to express their opinion on either count. A petition presented by the Goldsmiths to the council in 1431-2 reports that

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[179] See Beadle, *The York Plays*, 460, and Lucy Toulmin-Smith, *York Plays: The Plays Performed by the Crafts or Mysteries of York on the Day of Corpus Christi*, xxvii.

[180] For other discussions of these windows, see Clifford Davidson, *Creation to Doom* (170-3), and Paul Hardwick, "The York Masons' Monkey-Business."

> the Masons of this city have been accustomed to murmur among themselves about their pageant in the Corpus Christi Play in which Fergus was beaten because the subject of this pageant is not contained in the sacred scripture and used to produce more noise and laughter than devotion. (*REED: York* 732)[181]

The Masons also complained that "quarrels, disagreements, and fights used to arise among the people from this," and that these conflicts would in turn delay performance and prevent the craft from playing in daylight. For these reasons, the Masons sought a new assignment "which is in harmony with sacred scripture, and which they will be able to produce and play in daylight." This double motivation reveals a craft concerned with both proper religious activity and their own prestige. On the one hand, they desired a pageant with more suitable content that would not inspire inappropriate laughter; on the other, they wanted to ensure their own literal visibility, playing in daylight so that their production efforts would not be wasted. A concern for visibility reflects an awareness of prestige as much as a concern for appropriate content.

The Masons' second pageant was that of *Herod Questioning the Three Kings*. In the 1431-2 petition, the Goldsmiths state that they had previously "borne heavy burden and excessive expenses for their two pageants" (*REED: York* 732-3) which depicted both the Magi before Herod and the visit to the Christ child. They lament that "now times have changed for them and they have been made poorer in goods than usual" and in due course request to divide the burden of their pageants with the Masons. The city in turn granted this request in part so that the pageants could be performed "in the more lavish manner which is seemly for the praise of the city." This expectation of a lavish production suggests that the Masons had achieved a pageant better suiting their dignity, and that they were sufficiently wealthy to supply such a production.

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[181] It is not clear whether "in which Fergus was beaten" refers to the content of the pageant or instead records the audience's reaction to the apocryphal content. If the latter, it explains the origin of the "quarrels, disagreements, and fights."

It is not certain, however, that the content of their new pageant would have satisfied the Masons entirely. Whereas all other crafts could claim to represent at least one positive character, the characters in *Herod* are all thoroughly evil, albeit dramatically interesting. The Goldsmiths presented the noble and virtuous Magi, while the Masons enacted Herod, his son, and his court of sycophantic soldiers and manipulative counselors. The opening scene, added for the Masons' benefit when the pageants were split (Beadle, *York Plays* 429-433), introduces Herod as the most reprehensible character of the cycle. His opening words, "The clowdes clapped in clerenes þat þer clematis inclosis" (1) are full of bombastic alliteration, and his claims are entertainingly hubristic.[182] For example, Herod declares power over the weather and the gods, calling even Saturn his "subgett" (5). The Masons produced the *Herod* pageant for forty years, but their eventual adoption of yet another episode may indicate a lingering dissatisfaction with the respectability of their second assignment.[183]

Their third assignment may have satisfied both the Masons' devotional concerns and their desire for a dignified production. In 1477, with the financial support of the city's labourers, they took over the *Purification* pageant.[184] This pageant, initially described in the *Ordo* as *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, had previously been the responsibility of St. Leonard's hospital, a religious liberty. The pageant depicts Mary's visit to the temple for purification after childbirth, a practice required by the old law. While this purification is unnecessary in Mary's case, she insists on obeying God's laws. The pageant also presents the events described in Luke 2:25-38, where an extremely old Simeon and the ancient prophetess Anna are rewarded for their devotion with the sight of the Christ child.[185] The episode's emphasis on scripture and on witnessing Christ's birth would have fulfilled the Masons' desire for a dignified, devotional performance.

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[182] Quotations from the play are cited by line from Beadle's edition. Garrett Epp discusses the York cycle's use of alliteration, including Herod's "bombastic" style, in "Passion, Pomp, and Parody."

[183] Evans acknowledges the incongruity of the assignment as an answer to the Masons' concerns when she wryly suggests that the Herod pageant might be considered "more manly" (203).

Concern over appropriate scriptural content and a desire for a production that reflected well on the performing craft provide plausible motivations for the Masons' exchange of pageants during the fifteenth century, but questions about the Masons' relationship to civic authority remain. Why, for instance, did they agitate for change only in 1431-2 and in 1477, when their dissatisfaction would presumably have continued uninterrupted? Why did they make their grievances known to the city indirectly, using the Goldsmiths' petitions to articulate their needs? These questions cannot be answered by the traditional scholarly assumption that the Masons, like all play participants, were a standard civic craft. Instead, I suggest an alternative dynamic: that the Masons organized their participation in the cycle from within the religious liberties (i.e. outside official civic jurisdiction), and that their changing relationship with the York cycle is defined by their activities in those liberties.

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[184] Despite Beadle's statement to the contrary, it is not a given that the Masons relinquished their part in the *Herod* pageant, although the financial burden makes it likely (*York Plays* 433). No note is made of the Goldsmiths regaining the full production. It is not until 1561 that another craft, the Minstrels, becomes clearly responsible for the pageant, and that record still attributes *Herod* to the "late masons" (*REED: York* 334, 338). It is possible, then, that the Masons continued to play *Herod* while also sponsoring the *Purification*. Such a relationship would allow them to keep their memorable dramatic production while also providing them with a more devotional production. It would also explain why their name was not removed from the entry for *Herod* in the *Ordo*, while it was carefully erased and overwritten with another craft in the entry for *Fergus*.

[185] These characters may have provided the original interpretive connection with the pageant's previous owners, in that St. Leonard's Hospital cared for the sick and elderly.

The traditional scholarly assumption of a firm distinction between franchise and liberties with respect to the play discourages a consideration of associations organized outside of civic control, yet such organizations clearly did participate. As mentioned earlier, St. Leonard's Hospital initially sponsored the *Purification* pageant, while the Vicars Choral and a number of liberty-based craftsmen contributed to the play financially. While the evidence is scant in either direction, it seems likely that the Masons were similarly centered in the religious liberties, more specifically around the workshops established on the grounds of major construction projects. Exploring the implications of this organizational structure reveals an underlying rationale for the Masons' shifting pageant ownership: as their relationship to the spaces they constructed changed, so did their participation in the play.

Masons were notoriously itinerant, following their craft wherever major building projects led. As L. E. Salzman states, local craft associations were "an unsuitable form of organization for the masons, who were constantly on the move from one part of England to another" (33). For this reason, they rarely joined or formed local companies; rather the masons' lodge at the worksite provided structure and organization for the craftsmen. The lodge was

> the building on which the life of the temporary community of masons centred. It was primarily the workshop where they shaped and carved stone; but it also

> served as dining-room and as the place where they took their mid-day nap in the long days of summer, and it is at least likely that it often served as a dormitory. (Salzman 40)

Heather Swanson confirms that the lodge at the York Minster "was intended for the accommodation of twenty masons initially, but was rebuilt in 1412 to house twelve" (*Building Craftsmen* 6).[186] The lodge, then, was a physical building which housed the masons' tools and in which the masons did fine-work, but it was also a meeting place, the master mason's headquarters, and the centre of administration for a frequently transitory workforce. While masons who worked in the liberties might eventually take out the freedom and thus become members of the civic franchise, lodges would have made the existence of a civic craft association redundant.[187]

The conception of the York play as exclusively sponsored by civic crafts is so pervasive that even a scholar aware of the lodges' organizational capacity posits the existence of a separate civic craft association. In her seminal work on *Building Craftsmen in Late Medieval York*, Swanson acknowledges that "there is surprisingly little evidence of any craft organization among [the Masons]," that "No ordinances survive for a masons' gild in York," and that "the masons' lodge in the Minster provided sufficient organization for much of the transient labour" (10).[188] Despite this awareness of both a lack of evidence of civic organization and the presence of an alternative organizational structure, she concludes that "It seems reasonable to suggest therefore that . . . many masons belonged to some form of masons' gild in the city" (10). Her rationale is somewhat circular: "there was certainly a fraternity responsible for a play in the Corpus Christi pageant and the involvement of masons as searchers of boundaries and of building standards implies some form of organization" (10).[189] In the first instance, she assumes the existence of a civic craft because she cannot imagine the cycle as anything other than a civic production. However, as Douglas Knoop and G.P. Jones state in *The Medieval Mason: An Economic History of English Stone Building in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, participation in the Corpus Christi production "points to some kind of organization, but not necessarily to a craft guild" (142). While extra-franchise participation in the play was not the norm, it did happen, and it is possible that the Masons' participation was organized outside of the civic jurisdiction. Pageant ownership does not prove their status as a civic craft.

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[186] Although the lodge at York served as a residence, Douglas Knoop and G.P. Jones find that lodges were not regularly used in this way, contrary to Salzman's opinion.

[187] Swanson identifies 216 masons named in the fabric rolls; forty-eight of these took out the freedom, including all of the Minster's master masons. The freedom was unnecessary for men whose work was entirely on Church lands, which suggests that these men saw some value in becoming permanent residents of the civic franchise. Since the franchise sometimes employed foreign masons, it appears that the freedom was not absolutely necessary for these craftsmen to practice their vocation within the franchise limits. For many, the advantage may have been in sidelines of trading and hostelling. Foreigners could only trade in the open market, not in a shop, and anything "foreign bought and foreign sold" (i.e. bought and then re-sold) in the city could be confiscated (*YCR* 3: vi). Masons wishing to open inns, sell bread, ale, or grain in large quantities, or engage in other merchandising may have taken out the freedom in order to facilitate these supplementary activities. At least one mason's will attests to such secondary occupations. Hugh Grantham, made free as Hugo de Grantham in 1384, died in 1410, leaving "stone in store, £52 worth of malt in his brewhouse, a cow and calf and poultry among the stock of his kitchen, and cattle and sheep" (*VCH: York* 110) as well as money to settle his debts and cover the costs of his funeral. It is not clear, however, whether Grantham worked on the Minster. It would be worthwhile to conduct a thorough comparative study of the masons identified as liberty residents and those who took out the freedom.

The existence of craft searchers represents a more convincing argument for the presence of a civic craft, but masonic practices can again provide an alternative explanation. Precisely because masons were itinerant, and because they frequently worked on major building projects where errors would have significant repercussions, it was "quite usual to hold an 'Expertise', that is, a conference comprising a number of outside masters, to advise on faults that had developed in old buildings" (Coldstream 60). Masters could also be brought in to advise on works in progress or to testify to the proper execution of a contract. Moreover, it was common for jurisdictional bodies to hire a master mason, as the city of York did by the fifteenth century (Swanson, *Building Craftsmen* 8), and to appoint "official building inspectors" (Salzman 44) who would oversee the maintenance of civic structures and ensure that building by-laws were upheld. Salzman provides several examples of "sworn masters," including the searchers in York, who dealt "with boundaries, party walls, gutters, and tenant's fixtures" (44). These searchers were primarily engaged in arbitrating building codes, rather than policing craft members per se. In other words, masons had a tradition of objective consultation both among themselves and in the service of local jurisdictions which did not require the presence of civic craft. Furthermore, the examples of searchers that Swanson provides were also Minster masons, and in one case, the master mason for the Minster (*Building Craftsmen* 8). William Hyndeley became the master mason in 1473, and was appointed as a searcher in 1474 (6, 8). John Sutton worked on the Minster from 1473-1505, and served as searcher in 1475 (34, 8). An earlier searcher, John Throp, was appointed in 1419 and also worked on the Minster (8). These men served as civic searchers while their primary employment was located outside of the civic jurisdiction, again suggesting the practice of holding expertise rather than that of policing fellow craftsmen. Their identification in the records as searchers attests to a pervasive administrative terminology, rather than the presence of a civic craft.

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[188] *Building Craftsmen*, a Borthwick Institute publication, developed out of Swanson's dissertation and was the first of a series of publications in which she challenged traditional conceptions of craft associations. Her studies emphasize the arbitrary and administrative nature of craft identification and she has been instrumental in reconceiving the York play as a means of civic control over the city's artisans.

[189] Searchers were officials responsible for ensuring that craft ordinances were maintained and that craft members' products or services met an expected quality. Searchers were at times answerable to the civic authorities, although they were generally elected from among craft members.

There are other reasons to suspect the existence of a civic craft which Swanson does not address. One of the few records of the Masons' involvement in the cycle settles a dispute between the Plasterers and Tilers, on the one hand, and "the craft of Masons of this city of York" (*REED: York* 718), on the other, over the pageant contributions of artisans who built "stone walls or stone foundations of houses or any other work pertaining to the craft of Masons" (*REED: York* 718). Both the city's assumption of the authority to resolve the dispute, and the specific designation of the Masons as being "of this city of York" may indicate the presence of a civic craft, although the evidence is not conclusive in either instance. Other records suggest the possibility that references to "this city" encompass the larger metropolitan area, and not just the civic franchise. For example, an undated record from the fifteenth century in the *York Memorandum Book* describes a conflict over boundaries and states that the plaintiffs agree to accept the judgement "cementariorum et carpentariorum ejusdem civitatis" (2: 219): "of the masons and carpenters of this city" (my translation). The masons that are named as arbiters, the Minster's and city's master masons respectively, imply an elision of jurisdictional boundaries.[190]

The most significant evidence for the Masons as a civic craft lies in the creation of two seats for the Masons on the common council when it was reformed in 1517; however, information about the Masons' professional status at that time suggests the seats were advisory, not representative.[191] The reformed council was designed to provide a voice for the commons on the basis of craft representation, and it seems unlikely that the civic franchise would provide seats for an organization administered largely outside of their jurisdiction. However, the number of masons enrolled in the civic franchise in 1517 does not adequately justify the craft's position on the council. Larger and more prestigious crafts received two seats, while minor crafts received only one (*VCH: York* 137). By 1517, the number of masons in the city had fallen drastically: fewer than five masons were enrolled per decade in the early sixteenth century, as compared to enrollments as high as sixteen per decade a century earlier. Over fifty masons had taken out the freedom between 1400 and 1450, whereas only twenty-three were enrolled between 1450 and 1500, and the enrollment rate continued to drop in the sixteenth century (Swanson, *Building Craftsmen* 40-1). In 1561, the Minstrels, who had taken over responsibility for the *Herod* pageant, identified their pageant as that "somtyme brought forth by the late Masons" (*REED: York* 334), acknowledging the craft's demise. By 1565 there were so few masons in the city that the franchise had to hire one from another town when the Ouse bridge collapsed (Palliser, *Tudor York* 172). If a civic Masons' craft did exist in 1517, they could not have merited two seats on the basis of demographics. The Masons prominent representation may instead reflect the importance of their counsel in maintaining the civic environment. As with the city's master mason and the searchers, the common council may have included seats for masons, whether or not they represented a civic craft, because their expertise was valuable in making decisions which would impact the physical fabric of the city.

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[190] "Johannes Porter, magister lathamus ecclesie Cathedralis beati Petri Eboracensis, Robertus Couper, magister lathamus civitatis Ebor" (*YMB* 2: 219). Both men were, however, free citizens. John Porter took out the freedom 1453-4, and Robert Couper was enrolled in 1442-3.

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[191] Palliser, "Trade Guilds" (108-9), describes the creation of the common council, and his discussion is informed by *VCH: York* (137-8).

In the face of this uncertain evidence for the existence of a civic craft, there is an alternative explanation: the Masons' participation in the cycle was coordinated by organizations from within the religious liberties. There are two reasons to adopt this model. The first lies in the wording of the 1477 order empowering the Masons to present the *Purification* with financial support from the Labourers. The order is recorded twice, in Latin in the *York Memorandum Book* (*REED: York* 112-13, 777-8), and in an abbreviated form in English in the *City Chamberlains' Books* (*REED: York* 115). The *Memorandum* order records an agreement that

> those who are the Masons of this city at the time bear the burdens and expenses of the aforesaid pageant and will produce it to be played yearly in a good and fitting manner, in (good) order so that they would be willing to answer before him who is mayor at the time when they were forwarned of it. And those who are now and shall be at the time the Labourers of this city yearly henceforth, viz, the Faggotbearers, Gardeners, Earthwallers, Pavers, Dikers, and Groundwallers with earth, shall pay and deliver each year . . . to those who are chamberlains . . . 13s 4d to aid the expenses of that pageant. (*REED: York* 778)[192]

The order clarifies aspects of this financial arrangement and then repeats that the "Masons will produce the said pageant annually and bear henceforth all the expenses and burdens pertaining to the said pageant as though they wish to render yearly to him who is the mayor at the time." The order concludes with a lengthy explanation of how the

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[192] The Latin reads, "Cement*ar*ij istius Ciuitat*is* p*ro* temp*ore* exist*entes* Portant on*er*a & expens*as* pagine p*re*di*ct*e & ipsam in bono & honesto modo . Annuati*m* ludend*am* p*ro*ducent in ordine cum ad hoc p*re*muni*ti* fu*er*int sicut inde coram Maiore p*ro* tempore exist*enti* volu*er*int respondere . Et q*uo*d laboratores istius Ciuitat*is* Annuati*m* decet*er*o Videl*ice*t Kidberers Garthyners Erthe wallers Pavers Dykers Ground wallers w*ith* Earth . qui nu*n*c sunt et p*ro* temp*ore* exist*entes* in vigilia corporis chr*ist*i Annis sing*u*lis imp*er*petuu*m* solu*ent* & lib*er*abunt infra cam*er*am Consilij istius Ciuitat*is* Cam*er*arijs eiusd*em* p*ro* temp*ore* exist*entibus* tresdecem solid*orum* & q*u*atuor denari*orum* in Auxiliu*m* expens*arum* ipsius pagine" (112-3).

Chamberlains were to collect funds from the Labourers, who were not organized as formal crafts.

Two aspects of this order imply that the Masons were not formally under civic control. The first is the involvement of civic officials in collecting pageant silver and coordinating payment to the pageant owners. If the Masons were a civic craft, one might expect them to collect the funds themselves, but the Chamberlains' involvement speaks to a careful delineation of jurisdictions. If the Masons were not a civic craft, they would not have the authority to collect funds from civic labourers; involving the Chamberlains as middle-men in this context maintains an important jurisdictional distinction while still facilitating extra-franchise participation in the cycle.

The second aspect is the unusual phrasing which describes the Masons' participation: they are to produce the pageant "sicut inde coram Maiore p*ro* tempore exist*enti* volu*er*int respondere" (112), "so that they would be willing to answer before him who is mayor at the time" (778), and "sicut volunt Annuati*m* respondere Maiori p*ro* temp*ore* exist*enti*" (113), "as though they wish to render yearly to him who is the mayor at the time" (778). In both cases, the word "sicut," ("as, just as; as for example; as it were") introduces these clauses and serves to establish the Masons' willingness to satisfy the mayor as a simile, something which is like, but not the same as, what is described. The implication is that the Masons are not obligated to produce the pageant, but that they have chosen to do so as if they were obligated. The English copy of the order in the *City Chamberlains' Books* similarly stresses the Masons' agency in the agreement: they will produce the pageant "like as the said Masons afore the Mare for tyme being will answer" (*REED: York* 115). The phrasing in both records suggests that the Masons are not under the authority of the civic franchise, but that they agree to act as though they are for sake of producing the pageant. In combination with the chamberlains' intermediary role, the agreement overall implies that the Masons are organized outside of the civic jurisdiction.

The second reason for suggesting that the Masons were organized from within the liberties is a remarkable correlation between the Masons' changes in pageant ownership and the progress of renovations on the York Minster. A major rebuilding process began in the early thirteenth century and continued until the end of the fifteenth century; the two western towers which faced into the city were constructed last. The *VCH: York* describes this final stage of construction:

> the southern [tower] was probably begun about 1432 and building was still in progress in 1446; the northern one may have been started in 1456. Both towers were presumably complete by 3 July 1472 when the church was reconsecrated; the date has been observed as the anniversary of the completion of the building since that time. (337)

The Masons exchanged *Fergus* for a pageant better fitting their dignity in 1431-2, just as construction on the Minster reached its final stages and the masons employed there began working on the prospect which would come to dominate the view of the Minster from the city. 1400-50 also saw the highest number of masons regularly employed by the Minster, between eighteen and thirty-three at any given time (Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* 92). In contrast, the Masons' assumption of the *Purification* play in 1477 came five years after the Minster was complete. By this time, the number of full-time masons employed by the Minster had dropped to no more than six at a time.[193] Presenting the *Purification*'s humble holy family and devout temple inhabitants would have been less financially demanding than presenting *Herod*'s rich court, and was therefore better suited for the smaller group of Masons remaining in the city after the Minster was complete.

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[193] The number of masons enrolled in the freemen's register follows a similar pattern. There were fifty-two enrolled between 1401 and 1450, and only twenty-three between 1451 and 1490, with none at all

The *Purification* pageant's history provides another connection between the liberties and the Masons' pageant ownership. As mentioned above, the *Purification* was originally performed by the liberty of St. Leonard's Hospital. The records do not reveal when or why the Hospital stopped performing their pageant, but they do show that St. Leonard's also had a Masons' yard (Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* 91). It would seem that, as the number of masons employed by the Minster decreased, the lodge at St. Leonard's took over the responsibility for organizing pageant production on behalf of the local Masons, and logically chose to continue its parent institution's pageant.[194]

Finally, the Masons' later history speaks to their reliance on the religious liberties and to the consequences of the relationship between craft and liberties following the Reformation. Masons began to disappear from the city altogether after the dissolution of the monasteries, when their primary employers were disbanded. D. M. Palliser notes that "No masons took up the freedom of the city after 1536-7, . . . and their guild was defunct by 1561" (*Tudor York* 172). The latter date refers to the Minstrels' 1561 description of the *Herod* pageant as that belonging to "the late Masons" (*REED: York* 334). Palliser

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enrolled in the final decade of the fifteenth century. More detailed research is required to determine the relationship of these freemen with the liberties.

[194] The connection between St. Leonard's, the *Purification*, and the Masons potentially suggests an additional factor of masonic involvement in the play: that there were two separate groups of masons sponsoring two different pageants simultaneously. The first evidence that *Herod* had been re-assigned comes from the Minstrels' Ordinances of 1561, where the previous owners are identified as "the late Masons" (*REED: York* 334), an odd designation if the Masons had relinquished the pageant in 1477. Rather than assuming the linear progression of a single group, another explanation is that the Minster masons were responsible for *Fergus* and *Herod*, and the St. Leonard's masons were responsible for the *Purification*. Further exploration is necessary to determine the validity of this hypothesis.

adds that, "In a city with public buildings of stone, masoncraft was still needed, but not on a sufficient scale for full-time craftsmen" (172). When the jurisdiction of the liberties dissolved, so too did the organizations that served those jurisdictions. Without the organization of the Masons' lodges, there could be no Masons' pageant, a reality evidenced in part by the Minstrels' ordinances. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the *Purification* was either reassigned or not played in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

While it is ultimately impossible to prove where and how the Masons were organized, the presence and history of lodges in the liberties provides the best explanation of the Masons' involvement in the York play. Evidence of a civic craft is inconclusive, while the documents which record the Masons' shifting responsibilities imply the existence of a non-civic organization whose involvement with the play reflected their changing relationship to the spaces they constructed. At the height of the Minster re-building project, they requested and received a more dignified production; when construction was complete and fewer masons remained to fund the performance, they retired to a less demanding pageant. Their participation in the cycle draws attention both to the magnificent structures which they constructed outside of the civic jurisdiction, and to a conception of civic identity which could expand beyond the jurisdictional limits of the franchise to encompass the social community of the city as a whole. The Masons' history of pageant ownership argues for a play which had the potential to overcome jurisdictional boundaries and negotiate an identity which encompassed a number of distinct communities.

Response to Recession: Urban Labour and Civic Identity

The Carpenters' and Masons' histories with the York Play demonstrate a more diverse range of participant organizations and motivations than has been previously suggested, and there is no reason to suspect that these histories are anomalous. Scholars of medieval drama and urban history need to look more closely at the associations who sponsored the play in order to understand what that play meant and how it was used by all participants. One further example demonstrates how the play as a whole came to represent a larger conception of community during a specific period of cycle production. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the city's conception of the play altered from one primarily representing craft associations to one representing civic labour as a whole.

At the same time that the Carpenters sought to impose their authority on other wood-working crafts and the Masons adopted a less demanding production, the city's conception of the play shifted from one primarily representing craft associations to one representing civic labour as a whole. Prior to 1475, crafts were generally expected to fund their pageants from among their own members. There were a few exceptions: the Butchers gained the right to collect contributions from foreigners in 1431 (*REED: York* 47), while the Carpenters gained the same right in 1462 (*REED: York* 93), but for the most part crafts could only demand additional contributions from the members of similar associations which transgressed craft boundaries. Between 1475 and 1494, however, at least thirteen craft associations received permission to collect pageant silver from those designated as foreigners or non-members; other similar payments may have been disguised under orders that all artisans practicing a given craft were to contribute to the pageants. Crafts which benefited from foreign contributions in or after 1475 include the

Plasterers, Tilers, Glovers, Girdlers, Tanners, Linenweavers, Pinners, Cutlers, Scriveners, Drapers, Tailors, Spurriers and Lorimers, and Cappers.[195] Craftsmen in the liberties also became contributors. The Weavers, for example, requested and received a yearly sum from their fellow craftsmen in the Minster and St. Mary's liberties (Palliser, "Trade Gilds" 88). In 1485, the Girdlers, too, gained the right to collect pageant money from "eu*er*e p*er*sone as well men of the Churche as othr*e* inhabiting from hensfurth w*ith*in the Cite" (*REED: York* 136-7) who worked their trade.

Even as the geographical range of potential contributors increased, so did the hierarchical responsibility for pageant sponsorship. In 1474-5 and 1483 respectively, the ordinances of Plasters and Tilers and the Cutlers require masters to contribute on behalf of their foreign workers. Similarly, the same 1482 ordinances which extend the Carpenters' authority over other wood-workers also empower the craft to collect pageant funds from these masters for "ony yorney Man s*er*uant or . . . aprentys" (*REED: York* 127). A play previously funded for the most part by, and therefore representative of, the masters of civic craft association, became a catchment for civic labour as a whole.

Motivations for this change are straightforward: York was suffering from a recession, and enrollments in the freedom were dropping. The play would not have survived on dwindling craft resources alone. The choice to expand the range of contributions was financially motivated, but it would also have had consequences with respect to the play's negotiation of a civic identity. By enforcing or encouraging a wider range of contributions, specifically on the basis of participation in labour, the city and the pageant owners acknowledged the primacy of labour to the civic identity. They also, whether intentionally or not, relinquished some of their authority over the negotiation of that identity. By acknowledging foreigners and non-members as financial participants, the city and crafts also acknowledged the role these foreigners played in the civic economy and community of labour. These foreigners in turn could influence the civic identity through their refusal or willingness to contribute, and they would respond differently to a cycle production that they had helped to fund. The new financial arrangement allowed foreigners a voice, even if only a nominal one, and symbolically expanded the community represented by the play.

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[195] I have compiled this list from the *REED: York* pageant summary (657-85), but it would be worthwhile to review the archival evidence more closely.

Conclusions

The York play was not a fixed text; nor can its production be reduced to straightforward interactions between craft associations and civic authorities. Pageant owners came from a variety of backgrounds and motivations, and their histories influenced the shape of the cycle, just as the city's own changing jurisdictions and administration of labour and market practices altered their expectations for and requirements of the cycle. All participants, both sponsors and audiences, brought their conceptions of identity to the production, and the play served as a site for the constant renegotiation of these identities on individual, associational, jurisdictional, and civic levels. The York play, like other cycle plays, can only be understood in this context: as a multivalent, poly-vocal expression of civic identity.

Conclusion

In the previous five chapters, I have demonstrated how different groups approached and made use of their respective plays for different ends, ends which sometimes coincided with or complemented each other and which at other times echoed larger conflicts. Chester's crafts used the plays to negotiate identity and status, a purpose which tangentially supported the city's use of the play to transform a disruptive culture into an orderly one. In Coventry, the crafts' religious motivations were subsumed by the city's economic ones, but both groups felt the anxiety of a failing administrative system, and the extant texts reflect this anxiety. Newcastle's cultural context and surviving pageant hint at an antagonistic relationship between and among crafts and city, but also appeal to external authorities and enemies in a bid to overcome these internal conflicts. In York, groups with widely divergent motivations and relationships to civic authority participated in a negotiation of civic identity through the cycle. Over time and in response to economic pressures, this representation of identity expanded to include all aspects of civic labour, not just that circumscribed by officially sanctioned craft associations.

In each case, my discoveries about how the plays were received and experienced, how they were used to achieve social and political goals, and what motivated their production relies on a complex historical understanding of the context which informs each location. Historical context defines the overlapping associations and identities that the plays as cultural products helped to negotiate. Tracking changes in pageant sponsorship and craft status adds a diachronic dimension to my understanding of civic cycle dramas' cultural functions, while a close reading of ordinances and orders provides a more synchronic conception of cycle productions. Reading texts within these historical contexts allows me to identify contemporary resonances and local narratives which appear as subtexts to the biblical themes of the civic cycles.

In this dissertation, I have endeavoured to show how various groups made use of civic cycle drama, but I do not claim to have given a definitive reading of the plays' historical context or their cultural functions. As Clifford Geertz states, "Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. . . . The fact is that to commit oneself to a semiotic concept of culture and an interpretive approach to the study of it is to commit oneself to a view of ethnographic assertion as . . . 'essentially contestable'" (29). He adds that the progress of cultural analysis "is marked less by a perfection of the consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other" (29).[196] As I suggested in the introduction, the histories and narratives which I have described throughout this dissertation are of necessity imperfect. While I have engaged in the "refinement of debate" throughout this dissertation, I have also formulated theories and interpretations which are "essentially contestable." I expect that other scholars will develop or revise my findings based on more focused archival research and consideration of the cities in question, and I look forward to participating in this continued exploration. Beyond the work that I have begun here, there are also other texts and cities that merit attention. Studies which consider other records will reveal new data to take into account; those which explore other contexts will highlight different cultural functions; and those which tackle other cities will add to a larger conception of the role that civic ceremonials, and cycle drama in particular, played in negotiating relationships among relative strangers in the development of urban environments.

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[196] Geertz is specifically discussing the progress of interpretive anthropology.

Particularly for scholars outside of the British Isles, such exploration will require new, more complete transcriptions of craft and civic documents, or access to digital scans of archival material. REED has performed an important role by highlighting the wealth of available material in given locations and indicating where further exploration is merited. Early criticisms of the REED project took issue with the idea that REED's efforts would erase the need for further archival research, and that the REED volumes would form the basis of a comprehensive history of early English theatre (Colletti 248-9). The real issue, however, is in the lack of access to complementary or supplementary resources, such as full transcriptions of council records. These resources would allow scholars to construct their own sense of context and, in turn, develop histories which situate drama within a larger cultural context. As this dissertation demonstrates, REED's strength lies in locating and making accessible key documents which relate to histories of medieval drama, but those histories cannot be constructed from the REED volumes alone.

Beyond exploring the cultural function of civic cycle drama, this dissertation also raises questions about the plays in performance, about how the craft and civic identities negotiated through the plays were received by the audiences who witnessed them. In this dissertation I have focused on the sponsors and producers of the cycles, but further research remains to be done with respect to reception. In order to explore reception, it is first necessary to gain a better understanding of the many narratives which were communicated through performance beyond the ones recorded in the extant texts. Having undertaken this first step, I am now in a position to explore how the plays may have been received, and how this reception participated in the process of identity formation.

Overall, my approach has been motivated by the conviction that civic cycle drama participates in the quotidian, lived experience of the medieval city, that this drama creates history as well as recording it. As a cultural product, cycle drama required a great deal of energy and a significant outlay of resources to maintain; as such, it had to serve purposes for its participants beyond aesthetic entertainment or even religious education in order to justify its continuation. This justification lies at least in part in the roles that these texts played in the construction and negotiation of identity, whether on the level of the sponsoring craft associations, the administrative civic elite, or the larger civic community as a whole. Like the texts themselves, these cultural functions were never static; beyond the fluidity inherent in theatrical production, cycle drama exhibits a dynamic quality, negotiating shifting identities and transforming cultures within a civic context. As tools of transformation, they revealed and enacted multiple conceptions of craft and civic identity, although they never resolved these conceptions into a single, unified sense of identity. The plays portrayed a shifting range of alternatives that competed for dominance in the imaginations of all participants.

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Appendix 1: Comparative Table of Chester Craft Lists[1]

Crafts in Order of Extant Pageants[2]	1475-6 List of Apprenticeship Fees[3]	1500 List of Crafts (1474-1521)[4]	1539-40 List of Participating Crafts[5]	Early Banns (1539-40)[6]	Late Banns (1608-9)[7]	Undated Midsummer Proclamation[8]
1. Tanners (*Fall of Lucifer*)	Barkers		Barkers or Tanners	Tanners	Tanners	Tanners
2. Drapers (*Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel*)	Drapers	Drapers	Drapers and Hosiers	Drapers (Drapers and Hosiers)	Drapers	Drapers
3. Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee (*Noah's Flood*)	Drawers of Dee	Drawers of Dee	Drawers of Dee and Waterleaders	Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee	Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee	Beerbrewers, Waterleaders, and Drawers of Dee
4. Barbers/Barbers and Wax Chandlers (*Abraham, Lot, and Melchysedeck; Abraham and Isaac*) 3/2	Barbers	Barbers	Barbers, "Wax"chandlers, and Leeches "or Surgeons"	Barbers and Wax Chandlers (Barber-surgeons and Tallow Chandlers)	Barbers and Wax Chandlers	Barber Surgeons and Tallow Chandlers
5. Cappers/Cappers and Linen-Drapers (*Moses and the Law; Balaack and Balaam*) 3/2			Cappers, Wiredrawers, and Pinners	Cappers and Pinners (Cappers and Linen Drapers)	Cappers and Linen Drapers	Cappers, Pinners, Wiredrawers, Bricklayers, and Linen Drapers
6. Wrights/Wrights and Slaters (*Annunciation and Nativity*) 3/2		Wrights	Wrights, Slaters, Tilers, Daubers, and Thatchers	Wrights and Slaters	Wrights and Slaters	Wrights and Slaters
						Joiners, Carvers, and Turners
7. Painters/Painters and Glaziers (*Shepherds*) 3/2			Painters, Embroiderers, and Glaziers	Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers	Painters and Glaziers	Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers, and Stationers
8. Vintners (*Three Kings*)		Vintners	Vintners and Merchants	Vintners (Merchants and Vintners)	Merchants and Vintners (or Merchant Vintners: "marchantes vinteners")	# (see below)
9. Mercers (*Offerings of the Three Kings*)	Mercers	Mercers	Mercers and Spicers	Mercers	Mercers	* (see below)
10. Goldsmiths/ Goldsmiths and Masons (*Slaughter of the Innocents*) 4/1	Goldsmiths	Goldsmiths and Masons	Goldsmiths and Masons	Goldsmiths and Masons	Goldsmiths and Masons	Goldsmiths and Masons
11. Blacksmiths (*Purification, Christ and the Doctors*)	Smiths	Smiths	Smiths, Furbishers, "or Cutlers" and Pewterers	Smiths (Smiths, Furbishers, and Pewterers)	Smiths	Smiths, Cutlers, Pewterers, Cardmakers, and Plummers "Spurriers and Girdlers, Headmakers"
12. Butchers (*Temptation; Woman Taken in Adultery*)	Butchers	Butchers	Butchers	Butchers	Butchers	Butchers
13. Glovers (*Blind Chelidonian; Raising of Lazarus*)	Glovers	Glovers	Glovers and Parchment Makers	Glovers	Glovers	Glovers
14. Corvisers (*Christ at the House of Simon the Leper; Christ and the Money-lenders; Judas's Plot*)		Corvisers and Barkers	Corvisers "or shoemakers"	Corvisers (Corvisers or Shoemakers)	Corvisers (margin notes Corvisers or Shoemakers)	Cordwainers
15. Bakers (*Last Supper; Betrayal of Christ*)	Bakers	Bakers	Bakers and Millers	Bakers (Bakers and Millers)	Bakers	Bakers
16. Fletchers, Bowers, Coopers, and Stringers (*Trial and Flagellation*)	Coopers Bowers and Fletchers	Fletchers and Coopers	Bowers, Fletchers, Stringers, Coopers, and Turners	Fletchers, Bowers, Coopers (Coopers, Stringers, Fletchers, Bowers, and Turners)	Fletchers, Bowers, Coopers, Stringers, and Ironmongers	Fletchers, Bowers, Coopers, and Stringers
						*Mercers "and Apothecaries"
16A. Ironmongers (*Passion*) Note: one mss combines 16 and 16A.	Ironmongers	Ironmongers	Ironmongers and Ropers	Ironmongers (Ironmongers and Ropers)		Ironmongers "and Grocers"
17. Cooks/Cooks and Innkeepers (*Harrowing of Hell*) 4/1	Cooks	Cooks Tapsters and Hostlers	Cooks, Tapsters, and Hostlers, "and Innkeepers"	Cooks and Hostlers (Hostellers not in marginalia)	Cooks	Cooks, Innholders, and Victualers
18. Skinners (*Resurrection*)	Skinners	Skinners	Skinners, Cardmakers, and Hatters, Pointers, and Girdlers	Skinners (Skinners, Cardmakers, Pointers, and Girdlers)	Skinners	Skinners and Feltmakers
19. Saddlers (*Christ on the Road to Emmaus; Doubting Thomas*)		Saddlers	Saddlers, Fusters	Saddlers and Fusters	Saddlers and Fusters	Saddlers
20 Tailors (*Ascension*)		Tailors	Tailors	Tailors	Tailors	Tailors
21. Fishmongers (*Pentecost*)	Fishmongers	Fishmongers	Fleshmongers (Fishmongers)	Fishmongers	Fishmongers	Fishmongers
		The wives of the town (Assumption)	Colleges and Priests, on Corpus Christi	Worshipful Wives		
22. Clothworkers/ Clothiers or Shearmen (*Prophets of Antichrist*) 4/1	Shearmen	Shearmen	Shearmen	Shearmen	Shearmen	Clothworkers and Walkers
23. Dyers (*Antichrist*)	Hewsters	Hewsters	Hewsters and Bellfounders	Hewsters (Hewsters or Dyers)	Dyers and Hewsters	Dyers and Hewsters
24. Websters (*Last Judgement*)	Weavers and Walkers	Weavers and Walkers	Weavers and Walkers	Weavers (Weavers and Walkers)	Weavers	Weavers
						#Merchants and Mariners

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[1] I discuss the information compiled in this table in Chapter One. See pages 18 to 26.

[2] I have based the information in this column on the collation of cycle manuscripts in *Essays and Documents* (Lumiansky and Mills 195-202). The pageant titles and numbers are those used in Lumiansky and Mills's edition of the text (1: v-vi). The five extant texts sometimes provide alternate craft ascriptions. In these cases, I have indicated the number manuscripts that supply each variation, separated by a virgule, at the bottom right of the entry.

[3] The information in this column comes from *Essays and Documents* (Lumiansky and Mills 257-8), and is excerpted from the Chesire and Chester Archives, Mayor's Book (M/B/6a, f. 3v). Lumiansky and Mills note that they have reordered the list to match the craft order in the cycle. They chose to list Barkers after Glovers, likely to establish continuity with the 1500 list, but I have moved the Barkers to the top of the list to match their eventual placement in the cycle. I have added the Smiths: This craft does not appear in the list from *Essays and Documents*, but it does appear in Salter's version of the same list ("Banns" 11) and its appearance in the list is mentioned in the Administrative History of the description for the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Company records in the *A2A* catalogue. I discuss this list on page 20-1.

[4] The information in this column comes from *Essays and Documents* (Lumiansky and Mills 258-9), and is excerpted from Harley 2104. This list is transcribed more exactly in *REED: Chester* (22-3). I discuss this list on page 21.

[5] The information in this column comes from *Essays and Documents* (Lumiansky and Mills 259-60), and is excerpted from Harley 2150 (f. 85v). The list divides the pageants into three days, and I have used a double-line to indicate the breaks between days. Lumiansky and Mills identify Fleshmongers as an error for Fishmongers. The entry for the Colleges and Priests' presentation of the *Assumption* follows the list of crafts. This list is transcribed more exactly in *REED: Chester* (31-3). Of particular importance in the *REED: Chester* transcription is the identification of later additions, indicated above with ° °, according to REED editorial practice. Clopper identifies the later hand as that of Randle Holme (*REED: Chester* 517), presumably Randle Holme II, whom Clopper asserts was "active from the 1630s into the 1660s" (xxiv). Lumiansky and Mills, however, state that the Early Banns are in a manuscript "bound together by Randle Holme III" (*E&D* 273) and Salter also assigns the hand to Randle Holme III ("Banns" 450). Regardless of which Holme was responsible, the additions reflect a retrospective opinion (from the 1630s at the earliest), and not necessarily perceptions at the time of the list's composition. For example, under the entry for the Smiths, Holme attempts to make sense of the archaic spelling of "ffurbours" by writing "furbisher or cutlers." He then crosses out "cutlers," presumably when he realizes that "ffurbours" and "furbisher" are both terms for someone who polishes metal ("Fourbour," def. 1; "Furbisher," def. 1a). Holme has similar problems with Corvisers and Hostlers. I discuss this list in detail on pages 21 to 24.

[6] There is an edition of the Early Banns in *Essays and Documents* (Lumiansky and Mills 278-284) and a transcription in *REED: Chester* (34-39). For this column, the information in brackets indicates Holme's marginalia where it differs from the information in the Banns. The entries from the Vintners to the Fishmongers are also in Holme's hand. Clopper asserts that Holme "copied the omitted lines" (517) from the White Book of the Pentice, which is now missing. As such, the copied entries are likely more reliable than the marginalia, since the latter represent Holme's interpretation of the Banns, although it is impossible to determine how faithful his transcription of the Banns may have been. One can see how Holme's marginalia have been influenced in some cases by the 1539-40 list (see page 22).

[7] There is an edition of the Late Banns in *Essays and Documents* (Lumiansky and Mills 285-95) and a transcription in *REED: Chester* (240-7). Both are based on the copy of Rogers' *Breviary* found in the Chesire and Chester Archives (C/B/182).

[8] The information in this column comes from *REED: Chester* (474-6), and is excerpted from Harley 2150 (f. 161v). The additions indicated by ° ° are in Holme's hand. I discuss this list in more detail and deduce a suggested range of composition (between 1589 and 1605) on pages 24 to 26.

Appendix 2: Chronological Listing of Coventry Pageant Ownership and Contribution[1]

Pageant	Pageant Owners	Contributors pre 1490	Contributors post 1490[2]
Doomsday (1561)	Drapers (by 1392)		
unknown	Whittawers (by 1407)		Butchers (1495 – ?)[3]
Passion (1477)	Cutlers/Smiths (by 1420)[4]		Chandlers (1493), Cooks (1494), Bakers (1507)
Presentation and Disputation (1523)[5]	Weavers (by 1424)[6]		Fullers/Walkers (1529-1573), Skinners (1531-1573)
Nativity to Slaughter[7]	Tailors (by 1434); Tailors and Shearmen (by 1450?)[8]		
Harrowing to Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene (1534)	Cardmakers (by 1435); Cardmakers and Saddlers (by 1531); Cappers (1534)[9]	Saddlers and Painters (by 1435), Masons (by 1439)	Painters,[10] Skinners (1495-1531), Barbers (1495-1530);[11] Painters and Carvers (1526, 1531),[12] Cappers (1531-1533); Cardmakers and Saddlers (1574 only), Walkers (1574-9), Skinners (1574-9), Painters and Joiners (1574-9)
Deposition[13]	Tilers and Pinners (by 1414); Tilers, Pinners, and Coopers (by 1515)[14]	Carpenters (1435)	Carpenters[15]
unknown	Girdlers (by 1495)		Cappers (1495-1530), Fullers/Walkers (1495-1528); Barbers (1531-1552), Painters (1532)
unknown	Tanners (by 1497)		Corvisors (1507-1524,[16] 1552), Butchers (1552)
Death, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin[17]	Mercers (by 1518)		

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[1] I have collated the information for this table primarily from *REED: Coventry*, with some details supplied by *The Coventry Leet Book* (Harris) and *The Coventry Corpus Christi Plays* (King and Davidson). I have placed the dividing line for contributors at 1490 to include the Chandlers and Cooks, whose contributions are enacted before the 1494 order, but are a part of the same movement to diversify support for the pageants that the order of 1494 represents. The dates included in brackets under the Pageant column indicate the first reliable listing of characters which allows identification of pageant content. Those without dates have been identified by other means, as explained below. All other bracketed dates in the table indicate first references to craft-pageant relationships. Dates listed on their own (i.e. without "by") indicate specific initial dates for the relationship, while the latter years in date ranges indicate last payments or transfers of contributions to other pageants. Semi-colons roughly group periods of transition together. I discuss this table on pages 112 and 113 of this dissertation.

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[2] I have made 1490 the dividing line to accommodate the Chandlers' and Cooks' contributions to the Smiths' pageant, both of which were legislated just prior to the 1494 orders. I divide contributors before and after 1490 (as opposed to before and after the 1494 orders) because I see these two contributory relationships are part of the overall redefinition of the play as a civic event, a redefinition reflected most clearly in the 1494 orders.

[3] The Butchers are assigned to the Tanners in 1552 because, it is implied, they are not currently contributing to a pageant. It is not clear when the stopped contributing to the Whittawers.

[4] A 1428 record (*REED: Coventry* 9) clarifies that the Smiths had been discharged in favour of the Cutlers in 1420, and then required to resume the pageant again in 1427. Given that the Cutlers vanish from civic records thereafter, it is appropriate to assume that the fellowship had disbanded.

[5] The Doctors of the *Disputation* are never listed in the Weavers' production records, but there are separate payments for a little child (probably the Jesus of the *Presentation*) as distinguished from Jesus from 1550 on. Presumably the payments for Jesus, which occur from 1523 on, are always for the speaking role of the character in the *Disputation*, but the first positive evidence for a *Disputation* sequence is in the extant 1535 text.

[6] The Weavers were briefly supplanted by the Cappers in 1529.

[7] This is the content of the extant pageant, revised in 1535. There are no production records extant for this pageant.

[8] The Shearmen were associated with the Tailors by 1450, when they are listed together in an arms survey (*Leet* 248), and the extant text from 1535 identifies the Shearmen and Tailors as a single fellowship.

[9] The Cardmakers, Saddlers, Masons, and Painters are described as "oone fellauship" (*REED: Coventry* 15) in 1444, but, in 1495, the Cardmakers alone are identified as the pageant owners (*REED: Coventry* 83). In 1531, however, the fellowship includes Cardmakers and Saddlers, and the same record clarifies that the Painters and Carvers were contributors, not owners (*REED: Coventry* 131-2). The Cappers join the Cardmakers and Saddlers in 1531, but begin actively producing the play in 1534, and they take over entirely when the Cardmakers and Saddlers release their pageant and chapel in 1537.

[10] In 1532, the Painters are to split their contribution between the Cardmakers, etc., and the Girdlers. There is no further reference to the Painters after 1532 until 1574, when they again contribute to this pageant in association with the Joiners. Ingram reads the record ordering this split payment as indicating that the Painters had been supporting the Girdlers "for some time" (*REED: Coventry* 564), and King and Davidson repeat this idea (51), but it is potentially a misreading of the record. The order commands the painters to "pay yeirelie fromeherforth iiij s of the viij s that they wer wont to pay to a pagiaunt vnto the Craft of Gurdelers & the other iiij s of the seid viij s vnto the Craft of Cardemakers" (*REED: Coventry* 134). Ingram has clearly read the statement as saying "they were wont to pay to a pageant *of* the Craft of Girdlers," but the rhythm of the statement suggests the following punctuation: the Painters are to "pay 4s, of the 8s that they were wont to pay towards a pageant, to the Craft of Girdlers, and the other 4s to the Craft of Cardmakers." In other words, the record does not specify to whom the original 8s went, but only to which crafts it should go to henceforth. Given the longstanding association of the Painters with the Cardmakers, and their future association with the same pageant under the Cappers, it makes far more sense to see them as contributing to the same pageant all along.

[11] A Leet order in 1495 requires leeches and surgeons to contribute to the charges of the Craft of Barbers, on pain of 6s 8d (569). These charges are likely those that the Barbers pay towards the Cardmakers' pageant.

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[12] King and Davidson read the Leet record requiring the Carvers to contribute to the Painters "towardes the Charges of ther pagiaunt" (*REED: Coventry* 125) as an indication that the Painters had their own pageant (51), but the 1531 Cardmakers and Saddlers agreement with the Cappers clarifies that the Painters are still associated as financial contributors to the Cardmakers and Saddlers, as they had been since 1435. The Painters were never pageant owners. When the Carvers were discharged from the Carpenters (*REED: Coventry* 125), they were identified specifically as wood carvers. Their amalgamation with the Painters may suggest a continuing association with Masons (i.e. stone carvers) as well in a general collection of the decorative/constructive arts.

[13] Identified in King and Davidson in reference to a Pinners and Needlers' 1414 ordinance (51).

[14] Coopers are identified as the leaders of the fellowship in 1547 (*REED: Coventry* 174).

[15] Several named individuals, possibly cartwrights, are ordered to contribute with the Carpenters in 1495.

[16] A Leet order from 1524 frees "the Crafte of Shomakers" from contributing to the Tanners as long as they maintain a priest (*Leet* 687).

[17] King and Davidson conjecture this content based on a performance before Princess Mary, a will, and evidence of the Mercers' particular dedication to the Virgin Mary (41-4).

Appendix 3: Chronological listing of Newcastle Pageant Ownership[1]

Craft	Pageant, identified as	Source
Coopers (by 1427)		1427 Ordinary (1497 copy)
Smiths (by 1437)		1437 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Glovers (by 1437)		1437 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Skinners (by 1438)		1438 Ordinary
Barbers (by 1442)	The Baptising of Christ	1442 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Slaters (by 1452); and Bricklayers (by 1579)[2]	The Offering of Issac by Abraham	1452 Slaters' Ordinary; 1579 Slaters and Bricklayers' Ordinary
Bricklayers and Plasterers (by 1454)	The Creation of Adam, The Flying of our Lady into Egypt[3]	1454 Ordinary
Saddlers (by 1460)	Saviour's Sufferings[4]	1460 Ordinary; 1533 Ordinary[5]
Walkers (by 1477); Fullers and Dyers (by 1561)[6]	possibly The Last Supper[7]	1477 Walkers' Ordinary (1669 copy); Fullers and Dyers' Accounts (1561 entry)
Merchant Adventurers (by 1519) [8]; Drapers, Mercers, Boothmen, Vintners, and Hostmen (by 1552)	possibly Harrowing or Doomsday (Hostmen)[9]	Book of Orders (1519 and 1552 entries)
Weavers (by 1525)	The Bearing of the Cross	1525 Ordinary
Tanners (by 1532)		1532 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Glaziers, and Painters (by 1536)	The Three Kings of Cologne[10]	1536 Ordinary
Tailors (by 1537)		1537 Ordinary
Curriers, Feltmakers, and Armourers (by 1545)[11]		1545 Ordinary
Cooks (by 1575)		1575 Ordinary (1668-9 copy)
Millers (by 1578)	The Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of the Thraldom Bondage and Servitude of King Pharaoh	1578 Ordinary (1669 copy)
Housecarpenters and Joiners (by 1579); Joiners (by 1589)	The Burial of Christ	Housecarpenters and Joiners 1579 Ordinary (1669 copy); 1589 Joiners' Ordinary
Masons (by 1581)	The Burial of Our Lady St Mary the Virgin	1581 Ordinary (1669 copy)

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[1] I have compiled this table from the information provided by Anderson in his introduction (*REED: Newcastle* xii-xiii) and supplemented it with my reading of the records excerpted throughout the *REED: Newcastle* volume. I discuss this table briefly on pages 147-8.

[2] The Bricklayers have their own pageant(s) in 1454, so the relationship between these two crafts must have developed after that point. The Slaters' Accounts from 1568 include payments for a sword and "Croones" as well as charcoal and rosemary. The sword, charcoal, and rosemary would be appropriate for the sacrifice (rosemary can be burned as incense), which suggests that the episode was associated with the Slaters before 1579, and may indicate that the pageant belonged to the Slaters before they joined with the Bricklayers. Anderson offers "Crowns" for "Croones," but this seems out of place for the episode; more likely they were halos, an alternate translation suggested in the *MED* ("Coroune" def. 3).

[3] Identified in a summary of the 1454 Ordinary in James Walker and M. A. Richardson's *Armorial Bearings* (49; see also *REED: Newcastle* xxx). Without the original ordinary, it is impossible to tell whether the craft really performed two pageants or whether one pageant replaced the other at some point.

It is also possible that the Bricklayers and the Plasterers each brought their own pageant to the association, much as the trading crafts appear to have done with the Merchant Adventurers.

[4] Identified by Henry Bourne (qtd. in *REED: Newcastle* xii-xiii).

[5] The 1533 Ordinary refers to "pagions" (*REED: Newcastle* 20), which may indicate responsibility for more than one pageant. References to the Merchant Adventurers', Tanners', and Masons' involvement also imply multiple pageants.

[6] Although the *REED: Newcastle* suggests the terms "Fuller" and "Walker" are interchangeable, Anderson makes a distinction between Fullers and Walkers with respect to the pageants. He notes that the "Fullers and Dyers' accounts for 1561 show that their play must have been 'The Last Supper,'" but then states that "The Walkers' Ordinary refers to a financial levy for the procession and play, though it does not state specifically that the Walkers were to perform a play of their own" (*REED: Newcastle* xii-xiii). I have seen no evidence that these two terms should be read as representing separate craft associations.

[7] As Anderson notes (*REED: Newcastle* xii), the Fullers and Dyers' Accounts from 1561 imply their pageant depicted *The Last Supper*, since expenses include "Mawnday Loves & Caks" (*REED: Newcastle* 29).

[8] The earliest evidence of the Merchant Adventurers' participation may date from 1510. A 1552 entry in the Merchant Adventurers' Book of Orders (*REED: Newcastle* 23-4) states that the Company was responsible for five pageants, and that the town contributed money towards one of these, the Hostmen's pageant. In 1510 (*REED: Newcastle* 14) and 1511 (*REED: Newcastle* 17), the town paid for five "skowchons," shields displaying coats of arms, and the correspondence in numbers suggests that the five shields were related to the five pageants. The only other mention of the Hostmen's pageant is in the Chamberlains' Accounts for 1568 (*REED: Newcastle* 55, 56), and these accounts are detailed enough to suggest an independent production.

[9] Anderson suggests this attribution because the expenses include the fire and gunpowder appropriate to a hell mouth (*REED: Newcastle* xii).

[10] As Anderson notes (*REED: Newcastle* xii), the subject matter is confirmed by a 1599 inventory of costume in the Company Book, which included beards, crowns, and scepters for the three kings.

[11] The Ordinary of 1545 (*REED: Newcastle* 23) appears to establish the company for the first time for the purpose of maintaining a play: the Ordinary states that the three crafts "shalbe oone ffelowship combined and knyt vnder this Ordynance as to the bering of charge." It is possible that one of the three crafts brought a pageant to the fellowship, but the record could also reflect a revision and reassigning of the play as a whole.

Appendix 4: Newcastle Star Chamber Case[1]

Table A: Witnesses for the City, 1516

Trades		Number	
Primary Trade	**Secondary Trade**		
Mercer		32	
	Draper		2
Draper		2	
Boothman		18	
Shipwright		1	
	Mercer		1
	Draper		1
Spurrier		1	
Keelman		1	
Weaver		1	
	Draper		1
	Butcher		1
Mariner			
	Mercer		.5
	Boothman		1.5
Glover			
	Skinner		1
	Keelman		1
Skinner			
	Glover		1
Cordwainer		1	
Saddler		2	
Tailor		1	
	Hostman		1
	Keelman		1
Unspecified		2	
	Boothman		1
	Cook		.5
	Porter		.5
Totals		62	15
		77	

Table B: Witnesses for the Artisans, 1516[2]

Trades	Witnesses			Total Identified	Engaged in Merchandising
	Total	Trading	Reporting		
Baker	11	9	2	15	13
Smith	6	5	1	13	12
Cooper	2	1	1	3	2
Weaver	3	1	2	3	1
Dyer	0	0	0	3	3
Bottler	0	0	0	1	1
Tinker	0	0	0	1	1
Glover	1	1	0	1	1
Shoemaker	4	4	0	4	4
Cordwainer	1	1	0	1	1
Tailor	6	6	0	9	9
Slater	2	2	0	2	2
Walker	3	3	0	3	3
Fuller	1	0	1	2	1
Skinner	1	1	0	1	1
Keelman	1	1	0	1	1
Cardmaker	1	1	0	1	1
Wright	1	1	0	1	1
Shearmen	1	1	0	1	1
Butcher	1	1	0	1	1
Girdler	1	1	0	1	1
Powderer	0	0	0	1	1
Goldsmith	1	0	1	1	0
Mariner	1	1	0	1	1
Unspecified	0	0	0	1	1
Total	49	41	8	72	64

Table C: Summary of Star Chamber Witnesses, 1516

	Primary Trade	Secondary Trade	Engaged in a Second Trade
City	77	15	19%
Artisans	72	64	89%
Total	149	79	53%

Of 149 people identified (as or by witnesses), 125 are either merchants or tradesmen involved in merchandising (84%). Of these 125, 64 are practicing illicitly, while 61 are paid members of merchant guilds. Of the 61, 54 are merchants to start with, while 7 purchase the right to trade as a secondary craft. A further 6 witnesses for the city also purchased the rights to a second craft, but one which was artisanal rather than mercantile.

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[1] I have compiled these tables from the witness examinations in the 1516 Star Chamber case as transcribed in I. S. Leadam's *Select Cases before the King's Council in the Star Chamber, Commonly Called the Court of Star Chamber*. I discuss the case on pages 148 to 154.

[2] Because the witnesses identified people other than themselves as engaging in unauthorized trade, I have distinguished between the number of witnesses, the number of individuals identified as practicing a given craft, and the number of individuals engaged in unauthorized trade. The Witnesses column is further divided to indicate those who spoke on their own behalf as opposed to those who only reported on others. One might consider these latter eight witnesses slightly more suspect, since they open others to censure without risking themselves.